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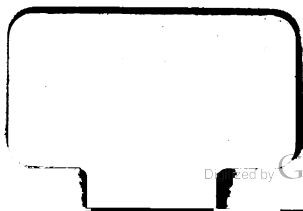




# *The Queen's Page*

Katharine Tynan

4145



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Copy from  
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"THEN I SAW THE OLD GYPSY TAKE MY SISTER'S HAND  
AND, SMOOTHING IT SOFTLY, PEER INTO IT."

# THE QUEEN'S PAGE.

*A STORY OF THE DAYS OF  
CHARLES I. OF ENGLAND.*

BY

KATHARINE TYNAN HINKSON.



NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO :  
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# THE QUEEN'S PAGE.

*A STORY OF THE DAYS OF CHARLES I.  
OF ENGLAND.*

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## CHAPTER I.

I AM CALLED TO COURT.

THE scent of water-lilies always brings sharply to my mind the day the summons came for me to leave Lily's Leaf; for it was summer then and the moat was full of the floating white and gold blossoms, and that morning when Father John said Mass the altar was decorated with them in open glass bowls. Moreover, through the casements set ajar the odors everywhere entered; and when my Aunt Monica summoned me to her presence my face as I came in was fanned by the June wind, sharp with the honey-scent of the lilies.

My Aunt Monica sat in her high chair,

as was her wont, and, though her position did not call for support, leant from habit on her ebony stick. At one side of her writing-table sat Father John smiling at me out of his dim old eyes and taking snuff. Tabitha, Aunt Monica's cat, was perched on his reverence's knee; and the three looked so as if they had been taking counsel together that unconsciously I laughed out.

"Why do you laugh, Lancelot?" asked Aunt Monica, with the air of severity which serves but to conceal a disposition of extreme tenderness.

"Forgive me, Madam," I said, "it was but at Tabitha's wise air, as though you and she and Father John had formed a council of deliberation."

She smiled, but she went on:

"You must put away childish things from henceforth, Lancelot, for we have come to a momentous decision regarding your future, and you will need to be grave and serious."

"Tush, Madam!" said Father John, laughing out. "When I was at the court of King Louis the page-boys were playful as kittens."

"Lancelot goes out in the world with the

honor of the Tregarthens in his keeping. He is to be loyal and true, brave and honorable; and to serve the Queen, his mistress, and the King's Majesty only after God. Then, if so be God wills it, he may perchance rebuild the fortunes of this ancient and impoverished house; and to this end he will need to be of a conversation and recollection greater than his fellows."

"Aunt Monica," I cried out, for I could contain myself no longer, "am I to go to court?"

"You go too fast, Lancelot. You should not so interrupt your elders. In due time I meant to have told you what we had decided on your behalf."

"You told him, Madam, in your first two sentences," said Father John, twinkling all over his rosy face.

"I had not meant such unseemly haste, then," said Aunt Monica, smiling too, for she always took Father John's jests in good part.

"When shall I go?" I cried out hot with impatience, not indeed to be gone, but to know how soon this future was to open before me.

Aunt Monica turned away her head.

"You will have many years to be gone in, Lancelot," she answered. "Have patience with your few days longer at Lily's Leaf."

"You wrong the lad, Madam," said the priest; "it is the nature of youth to be eager and impulsive."

"You wrong me indeed, Madam," I echoed. "I shall grieve to leave you and Father John, and my sister, Isabel, and Rowantree, and good mistress Rowantree, as well as Selim and Saladin, Don and Slut and Vixen, and Peter, whom I had nigh forgotten. My dappled fawn, too, whom I shall leave to Isabel, and the chickens in the water-hen's nest on the island in the moat. They will not be fledged till I am gone. And Isabel, because she is only a girl, is not to be trusted with the boat on the water. These things and more I shall think of when I am at the Palace of Whitehall."

"I pray you may long think of such things," said Father John, and he did not smile. "The heart of a child: that is the thing to keep all the days of one's life. Your nephew has that, Madam," he said, turning

to Aunt Monica as though he had forgotten my presence.

"You are to be the Queen's page, Lancelot," went on my aunt. "His Majesty has deemed it advisable to dismiss her French servants; and it will be hard to fill the places of those to whom she was accustomed in her happy girlhood before she came to this England of ours which has shown her but a dour face. Let her feel that one young English gentleman can serve her as loyally as they, though he lack the same privilege of long acquaintance. Serve her in all things second only to God."

"I will so serve her," I said; and then my thoughts took another turn.

"Pray, Madam," I cried impetuously, "shall I wear a sword?"

"You shall, Lancelot. Father John has taught you to use it. Do not be too quick to draw it."

"Nor to sheathe it, my lad," put in Father John. One could never forget for long that he had been a gallant soldier and had fought in many battles ere ever he was a priest.

"Trust him, Madam," he said again to my



aunt. "I have taught him more respect for the blade than that he should go tilting at windmills with it as did that excellent knight, Don Quixote de la Mancha, whose adventures please me more the more I read them. He will keep his in his scabbard, unless honor and the cause of his lady the Queen should force him to draw. He shall have my little Toledan sword, a toy to look at, but serviceable at need. God knows how soon the need may arise," he muttered to himself; and a gloom came over his comely face.

"And now," cried I again, "when must I go?"

"Alas!" said my Aunt Monica, "the command gives us short time for leave-taking."

"So much the better, Madam," interrupted Father John. "You would not make the lad soft?"

"I have tried not to, indeed," said my aunt, humbly, and then turning to me:

"On Monday sennight you will leave us, Lancelot. It gives scant time for our preparations, but I shall see that you go not ill-equipped. And now, go tell Isabel your

news. There is much for me to do in face of so sudden a departure."

Bowing myself from her presence I went out of the room with Don, her little spaniel, fawning at my heels, as though he knew it behooved him to be fond while he might.

I was so full of my great news that as I ran through the gardens all asleep in the sun I kept shouting "Isabel" at the top of my voice, and barely waiting for an answer. At last I came out by the side of the moat, and found her where I had left her in the moored boat among the water-lilies, with her pale face resting on her hand and an open book on her knee. It was a romance Father John had permitted her, with more of arms in it perhaps than suited her sex, but from what she told me of it a right valiant book. Myself, I had little time for the books Father John and my sister loved.

Isabel looked at me out of her quiet eyes which seem to my mind always so wise.

"What is it, Lancelot?" she asked. "I know there is something."

"There is something, Madam Stay-at-Home; there is much. On Monday sen-

night Master Lancelot Tregarthen goes to court."

I said it proudly, and as I spoke paced away from her a few steps and returned. Already I felt the sword at my side and the velvet cloak on my shoulder. Already I wore my feathered hat. When I turned back with a swelling breast I saw that Isabel's face was sad.

"Ah, Lancelot," she said, "and you are glad to go."

"Why that," said I, "is like Madam, our aunt. I suppose all women-folk must be alike. Can I not be proud to go, and yet grieve for all I must leave?"

"I suppose so, Lancelot," she said. "But I shall be lonely, bitterly lonely. Think of the years we have been together."

"There never was a more loyal little sister," said I. "You have played the comrade to me well, though I think your heart was more in your book and your spinet and among your doves and canaries than in playing the boy to me. Yet you never let me feel it."

She blushed with pleasure, and her color was like that of a little rose much prized by

our Aunt Monica, which is called the Rose Celeste and hath for colors rose upon white and is of a most rare fragrance.

"I go to be the page of the Queen," I said, leaping into the boat, and setting it to rock among the water-lilies.

"You will be near her Majesty," she said, almost in a whisper, "and you will see our lord, the King. Ah, Lancelot!"

"Her Majesty has need of love. What do you think, Isabel? They have forced the King's majesty to banish her loyal French servants from court, because they are of the old profession as we are. She is so left alone except for the love of her consort and her children."

"But you, Lancelot?"

"The sourest rogue in the Parliament would not dare say a Tregarthen was disloyal," I answered.

"It will be gay at court?" she said wistfully.

"A court is always gay, or seems gay," I said wisely. "But the clouds gather thicker about the way of the King. This Parliament, which flouted him when he was first come to it, encroaches on every side. He

will not yield to it; and he has not the iron heel to stamp it under."

"Poor King!" said my sister, and her eyes were full of light. "But how much you know, Lancelot, and how finely you say it!"

For a minute I was tempted to take her praise because it was sweet. Then I remembered my honor and said:

"So much have I heard Father John say when he talked with our aunt, half as if he had no audience."

"Father John's heart is with the King."

"So is every gentleman's."

"Except our neighbor the Lord Fairfax's."

"Let us not speak of him," I said with anger.

"I would," said Isabel, "that the Queen had me to court for one of her waiting-women."

"Perhaps she will, then," said I, "finding no lack of love in Lancelot Tregarthen."

"I would die for her or the King!" said my sister.

"So also would I, and many another. So would Don, I dare swear," said I, lifting the dog's silky ear half in jest. "Does not his

own cousin sit at court on the footstool of the Queen?"

For it was true our little dog had come to us from the court, being the gift of our cousin, Lady Joan, who was near the Queen's person, and to whom I owed my pageship.

"If misfortune should befall their sacred Majesties," said my sister—"which Heaven forefend!—how great a happiness for you to be near them, to serve them even at the risk of your life!"

"That I should do, be sure, even though it should cost me my life. But they would not dare lay hands on the Lord's anointed. They have done so much as they dare in insulting and resisting him. Yet the knaves can never touch his dignity nor the beauty of his person and character. So much have I heard Father John say," I added hastily.

"You will have finery to go to court?"

"I had not thought of it. I shall have Father John's little sword of Toledo, damascened with gold and ivory. I shall need a horse, too, when I ride with the Queen."

"Not Selim?"

"Selim is too old. Father John and Madam Tregarthen will see to it."

"Lancelot, have you ever thought how fine a cavalier Father John must have been in the days when he and our grandfather were young together?"

"I have thought on it. Even yet he walks like a cavalier."

Isabel looked away over the wide and empty park, and I heard her sigh.

"It will be lonely when you are gone," she said.

"You will have your books, Isabel. And you must take care of our aunt. She is old, though she is so straight. And mind you, Isabel, you are not to take out the boat alone. You are only a girl, and the moat is very deep, and thick with the roots of the lilies. Promise me you will not."

"I will not, Lancelot. Indeed I think I shall come here no more till you return."

"The water-hen's brood will all be fledged by then," I said.

"There will be other broods, maybe, ere you return," said my sister sadly.

## CHAPTER II.

### I MEET WITH AN ADVENTURE.

I HAD so many distractions at the time that I hardly remembered to be sad except when I met the eyes of my aunt or my sister Isabel, and even then I could not help my heart beating high when I thought of the things that were before me.

We had always been pinched for money at Lily's Leaf. That I knew, though I had no experience of its want, needing so little, and having so many pleasures within my grasp that did not call for payment of money.

Yet I left home as well equipped, I thought, as any young gentleman of my estate.

A few days before I left home I was summoned by Father John to the front of the house, and there, to my amazement and delight, I beheld two horses being led up and down. One was a very pretty barb, of a bright bay color, and an animal of much



spirit and sensitiveness, as I could see by his fine slender head, his upstanding ears, and the way he spurned the earth as a creature of air and fire. The instant I saw him I loved him, and my first instinct was to run to him and caress him. Then my attention turned to the other horse, a stout, well-built little cob, well fitted for the road and for hardships, but showing by the other as a peasant maid might by Isabel.

When I had taken in the two, I turned to Father John, who was watching me with benevolent amusement, and so absorbed that he held a pinch of snuff between his finger and thumb without partaking of it.

"Well, Lancelot!" he said.

"Oh, sir," I cried, "the barb takes my heart."

"Try him," he said, still smiling.

I was in the saddle in an instant and cantering across the park. I had never ridden a horse of such spirit, for Selim and Saladin were old; but so sweet was its temper and so obedient to the will of the rider, that I bestrode him as if we were one creature. I came back with an indescribable sense of exultation and found that my Aunt Monica

and Isabel had joined Father John on the terrace steps.

"He is all I could dream of in a horse," I said.

"He is yours, Lancelot," my aunt said.

I could only say, "Ah, Madam!" for I was overcome with pleasure.

"And the cob?" I asked at length.

"The cob is for your servant. Have you looked at him at all, or have your eyes been all for the barb?"

I turned then and looked at the stout country fellow who held the horses. In his smart servant's dress I had not recognized him, but here under the hat grinned Tom Dale, a village lad who was attached to me ever since I had thrashed him for poaching.

"Why, Tom," said I, "will you too come to court?"

"That will I, master," said he, "and anywhere thee goest. I am a stout hand with the quarterstaff, as thee knowest, and shall knock down the first knave that says 'mum' to me in Lunnon streets."

"Don't set out by quarrelling, Tom," said Father John, "or you may be more trouble to your young master than help."

"No, no," grinned Tom. "I said if any said 'mum' to me. I won't draw without a cause."

How it comforted me to have Tom Dale go with me, for it was not like leaving Lily's Leaf altogether behind ; and it was a new pleasure to me to think of showing Tom the world, though, indeed, I was quite as rustic and untravelled as he.

On the Monday sennight therefore we set out riding to London, and lying at the inns on our way. Our packages went by coach, and since the coach stayed not, were likely to reach London before ourselves, unless indeed they were rifled by highwaymen on Hounslow Heath, a possibility which brought my heart into my mouth when I thought on the great case of confections and delicacies our old housekeeper, Mrs. Rowantree, had packed for us. There would be none such, I could swear, at the Palace of Whitehall.

Despite the wet eyes at parting—I was but sixteen, and to my shame and sorrow blubbered outright—that was a journey to remember. I had never been from home before, but perhaps because of that I gave my orders very loud at the inns, and ordered the

knaves here and there as if I were accustomed to a large retinue. Nor did my conduct seem displeasing to those I met with, for I remember particularly the kindness of my hostesses and how one good creature almost wept over me because I, a boy, was taking the world by storm alone but for Tom Dale, and with such an unforeboding heart.

Also I noticed much kindness at those places where my servant let it be known that we were going to court ; and as we rode away blessings on the King's majesty were cried after us, with confusion to his enemies, so that I could not doubt the heart of the common people was with the King.

We had something of an adventure when not thirty miles off London. We had ridden hard that day, and I was already half asleep when I heard a great cavalcade ride into the inn-yard.

The next morning when I was dressing there came a sharp rapping at my door, and when I opened it, a serving-maid stood there with a disordered countenance.

"O, young gentleman," she cried, "if you have any regard for the life of your servant, I pray you to come at once to the stable-yard,

where by the horse-block he is even now engaging three of Sir Thomas Fairfax's men, if they have not indeed overcome him, poor youth."

"I will come!" I cried, seizing my little sword of Toledo, though indeed I meant not to flesh it so unworthily as on Fairfax's knaves; for their master I regarded, as did all cavaliers, with the loathing and contempt due to his recusancy. But I trusted to fate to put in my hand a weapon more suitable.

The serving-lass hurried me along the narrow corridors of the inn, and down an outside staircase, talking all the time with a fluency which belongs to the unlettered of her sex.

"He is a brave lad and a rash," she said, "that servant of yours, young sir, and as like to old Grip, our Yorkshire tyke, as ever I saw, for he knows not when he is beaten. Moreover, in this encounter 'twas he set upon the three, and each of them is old enough to be his father, and well armed to protect their lord's coach from highwaymen. And well I believe they would have refused his quarrel had he allowed; but as well get our Grip to let go of a rat once he has seized it."

All this and much more she chattered as she ran, and I was wroth with Master Tom and would not have grudged him a broken head if I could have spared him, for his foolhardiness in hampering our journey by his desire for a fight.

But presently coming out by the corner of the stable-yard where the horse-block was, I saw my rogue pinned in a corner with the blood running down from his pate, and three fellows with cudgels laying on to him as heartily as ever I saw.

"Let be, knaves!" I cried, drawing my sword, and striking the nearest one with the flat of it.

The three turned and I saw the fight had inflamed them, and they set upon me, whereupon the serving-lass went off bawling for help, and my Tom, coming to himself, gasping, flung himself upon the stoutest of them with a roar of fury.

How long I could have kept the other two back with my sword I do not know, but I had an unexpected ally.

A tall and handsome man with the air of a soldier suddenly appeared upon the scene. He caught my two assailants each by the col-

lar of his doublet and flung them aside, easily, for he was of great strength.

"Dickon," he said, "and you, Giles,"—and his cold anger was worse to witness than the rage of the choleric—"how dare you brawl like this in a public place? And how is it that I find you two grown men matched against this boy? Is mine a service for cowards and bullies?"

The fellow who had been engaging my Tom had slunk off, and it was but the menace of my eye that kept my rogue from springing anew on the others.

"We provoked no encounter," muttered one of the knaves. "But this red-headed fellow here, on learning that we were the General Fairfax's men, demanded that we should shout for the King, and since we would not, set on us as if there were a dozen of him."

The gentleman, whom I now saw to be Sir Thomas Fairfax, flushed darkly and then went pale.

"And why not shout for the King?" he asked sternly.

The fellow lowered his cunning eyes.

"He made it a cause of quarrel. Indeed

it was 'Have at you !' before we could open our mouths."

"There, away with you !" said their lord contemptuously, "and see there is no more brawling, or you will fare worse."

"I am sorry, sir, that you have been inconvenienced by these rascals," he said to me courteously, "but I am glad I came in time to save you drawing your sword to defend yourself."

"I but gave them the flat of it," I said. "I keep the point for nobler uses."

A smile lit up his sad and stern face.

"You are going to seek your fortunes," he said, "like the boys in the fairy-books ?"

"I think mine is already made," I said.

"Why, I am glad of that for your sake, but grieved for a project of my own. If you had been for soldiering I would have asked you to take service with a plain soldier, even with myself, for I see you are gallant though still but a boy."

"I am sixteen come May," I said, "and I go to a nobler service than even Sir Thomas Fairfax's—to that of his Majesty the King."

A shadow crossed his face.

"God save the King's majesty !" he said,



lifting his hat. And after that he went from me without a word, not even knowing that I was his neighbor at Lily's Leaf.

As we rode forth from the inn-yard that morning we passed General Fairfax's party in act to take the road. Himself was on horseback by his wife's coach, and was talking with her as we rode out. I caught a glimpse of my Lady Fairfax as I passed and doffed my hat to her. It was a beautiful face, I saw, and a proud head held high, but it carried something of discontent and trouble that was a cloud on its beauty.

Her lord spoke to me as we passed by.

"Young gentleman," he said, "will you not ride with my party till we are in London streets? From here the roads are infested with footpads and highwaymen, from whom, being well armed and numerous, even such courage as yours is poor protection."

"No, I thank you, sir," I said very stiffly, and rode on my way.

And yet I said to myself, unwillingly, that if he had not been leagued with traitors against the King's majesty I could have loved the man, so much was I drawn to him.

However, we reached London without mis-

hap and the lodgings of my cousin, the Lady Joan, who was no longer at court. And there we lay that night, for we were travel-stained and unfit for courtiers.

She was the prettiest and merriest lady I could wish to see, and yet—and yet she too had the cloud upon her that I was coming to believe was common to those who were friends of the King or had once been.

The tale of Tom's encounter with Fairfax's servants amused her mightily.

"I must carry it to the Queen's majesty," she said. "'Twill take her fancy, or I know nothing of her. She will be for seeing your Tom, Cousin Lancelot. He must be a merry rogue."

And then with a sudden change of voice: "Alack!" she said, "if he sets out to split the skulls of all them who will not shout for the King, 'twill be a busy rogue as well."

## CHAPTER III.

### I AM COME TO COURT.

THE next day my cousin Lady Joan and I went by water to Whitehall Steps. I was not a little proud of my appearance in my new garments of black velvet and white satin with fine ruffles of lace, and a befeathered hat.

"Why, you are a fine fellow, Cousin Lancelot," said my lady when I was come into her presence ; and I was pleased, for I had feared something countrified in my manners or attire which should bring upon me the jests of the other pages.

I said as much, and my cousin reassured me.

"And what would you have done if it had been so ?" she asked with laughter sparkling in her eyes.

"I should not have drawn," I said, "for blood-letting were unbecoming at court, but I am good at fisticuffs. I think I should have

made them mum-chance when I went by without using my sword of Toledo."

"Mercy on me!" cried my cousin in mock consternation. "Then it is well there will be no cause for quarrel. Why, to brawl in the palace! 'Twould be the Tower no less, and an end to my fine designs for Sir Lancelot Tregarthen."

"Then it shall not be," I said, kissing her hands; and then we sallied out to the water-stairs where our boat was awaiting us.

My cousin had an audience for four o'clock, and while we waited, being come in good time, I saw several of those who would be my brother-pages, and could not but admire the way they ruffled it, who were after all but of my own age, and not so long perhaps come to court. And so full of pranks and jests they seemed towards one another that I could not but remember Father John's words about the pages of King Louis in his day.

Also there were ladies-in-waiting passed to and fro, young and beautiful and richly dressed, yet none so beautiful, I thought, as my cousin. And grave lords crossed the antechamber from time to time, and I noticed that

many of them wore the look of trouble which but last night I had seen mar my cousin's beauty. Moreover, though the day was summer, the palace was so dark that I could have sworn it winter outside. Indeed the only gay things were the pages, and the silks of the ladies and the cushions on which lay many little dogs like to our Don, but be-ribboned and belled as he never was in his wild life.

Presently the door which gave access to the royal chamber was flung open, and a very handsome cavalier came forth. Though swarthy and sun-browned, his face, with its slight peaked beard, but made the finer setting for the most vivacious eyes I had ever beheld ; and he showed so gallantly, with his sword clattering and the spurs jangling at his heels, that it was most heartening in face of the gloom that hung over the palace. Unconsciously I sprang to my feet as he passed, which he, noticing, swept me the finest of bows, the feathers of his hat touching the floor and a smile lighting his dark face.

When he had passed I turned to my cousin Joan.

"I would that lord were my master," I cried.

"Fie, little cousin," said Lady Joan, with her finger to her lip. "You talk treason. Your master is that lord's lord. And yet, faith, your choice were no discredit to you. That is Prince Rupert of Bohemia."

"Ah!" I cried, with my heart in my mouth, "that I should look in one day on their Majesties and on Prince Rupert!"

"You are right, cousin," said Lady Joan; "he shows amid our Cavaliers as his mother, the Princess Elizabeth, among other ladies in the verses of the accomplished Sir Henry Wotton."

She murmured the verses as if she played to a lute, for we had the chamber to ourselves.

"You meaner beauties of the night,  
That poorly satisfy our eyes  
More by your number than your light—  
You common people of the skies,  
What are you when the Moon shall rise?"

"I daresay," she went on, "that Prince Rupert would welcome you to his Cavaliers later in the Holy War, yet I think, little cousin, your place will be by the Queen, a quieter service, but not less noble."

"Indeed I wish for no other," cried I.

Just then we were called to our audience. In the shadow of my cousin I passed within the presence-chamber, with my head swimming and my eyes half-blind. Within the door we paused an instant, and I had time to collect myself. Then I saw the King's majesty ; and more dimly the Queen, who looked at my cousin with a pretty gesture of her finger to her lip, for, as I discovered in a second or two, the King was reading aloud a verse he had but newly made.

Then I could have echoed Isabel's cry : "The King, ah, the King !" for towards him, who was loved as surely no man was ever loved before, there swelled in my breast such a passion of loyalty as my poor heart could hardly endure and not break.

The room, panelled with oak and draped with tapestry, was dim ; though where the lattice-window stood ajar you could see the sun in a green and pleasant cloister, and clusters of roses hanging by the pane. But within there burned two wax candles in silver stands on the King's writing-table, lighting that face of unspeakable gentleness and sweet melancholy as the winter sun lights a forest.

His long curling hair flowed about his shoulders. He was attired in black velvet, its only relief a blue riband and a diamond order. His voice was pensive as his face, where the promise of martyrdom was plainly to be read ; and the words were to me dulcet and bitter, for indeed already he seemed to have foreseen what was to come.

The Queen I saw later. She was playing with a little dog in her lap, and a dark-haired child stood by her knee and joined in the game. She had a most delicate and lively face with very sparkling black eyes, and her smile towards my cousin was so sweet that I could not but believe her compact of humility and grace.

“ Well, sweetheart,” said the King, when he had finished reading, “ do they please you, my poor verses ? ”

The Queen burst into pretty commendations of them, in mixed French and English, drawing towards her at the same time the dark-haired boy.

When the King had set aside the verses with a sigh, the Queen beckoned my cousin to come out of the shadow by the door where we waited. I saw my cousin advance and



kiss the Queen's hand, who very kindly raised her and seated her on a tabouret close to herself.

"Ah, my Lady Joan," said the King, as though he woke from a dream, "so you have not forsaken us though we are in eclipse, and friends would best serve their own fortunes to fly away from us."

"They would be no friends," said Lady Joan boldly, "and the sun in eclipse is yet the sun."

"Well said!" cried the King; "and then your sex, Madam, is ever faithful in misfortune, and calamity but raises its spirit, as I should know"—with a tender glance at his consort. "But you have brought her Majesty a new gentleman for her service, have you not?" he went on.

Lady Joan beckoned me to come forward, and I, advancing with trembling knees, fell before the King's footstool and kissed the hand he held out to me.

"You are of loyal stock, Sir Lancelot Tregarthen," he said, "and I think we may count on your affection."

"Indeed I would die for your Majesty!" I blurted out, and so great was the extremity

of my affection towards him that I felt myself, to my consternation, in like to weep like a great girl.

However, the King did not seem displeased.

"Live for us rather, my child," he said very gently. "We cannot spare one faithful subject from our side in these dark days."

Then, standing up, he led me to the Queen and presented me to her, and I kissed hands, and if my eyes still turned towards the King I think she was not displeased.

Yet I can see her, my most dear Queen and mistress, plainly at this moment as I saw her then. She was robed in white satin, with deep lace ruffles, and she wore pearls about her neck. In her hair, too, which came loosely curling on her forehead and rippled away in soft curls and clusters to the back of her head, was the milky fire of pearls. Yet at the moment my gaze might scarcely be withdrawn from the King.

"And what can you do for our service, Sir Lancelot Tregarthen, besides loving us?" she asked sweetly.

"I can handle a sword, your Majesty," I said, "having learned sword-play from an ac-

complished swordsman. Also I can hawk and hunt. I can ride with your Majesty, and can do your Majesty's errands swiftly and secretly. Moreover, anything your Majesty commands me I will do to the best of my ability, and if I fail it will not be because your Majesty's service has not my whole heart."

"We have several pages who can hawk and hunt, ride, and make play with the sword—to say nothing of being as proficient at the ball as at the lute. Some there be, too, can pen a sonnet. And most, we think, are honest lovers of us and our cause. Sir Lancelot Tregarthen, can you serve our Mass?"

"That can I, your Majesty. I have answered the Mass for Father John, at home in Lily's Leaf, since almost I could go alone."

"Why, then you are a clerk as well as a valiant young gentleman," she said, "and you are come in time; for since the Parliament would have our suite go packing, we have needed a young gentleman to answer the Mass, till," she said bitterly, "the Blessed Sacrifice also they banish."

"That they will not dare, sweetheart, since you have my promise."

"Alas, they will dare all things," said the

Queen ; and for a moment her black eyes swam in tears.

Afterwards we were dismissed most graciously, and I took my place among the pages, among whom I found excellent good friends, albeit somewhat saucy to a newcomer. They were not like her Majesty and Lady Joan and myself, of the old profession, but there was a bond between us and them in the love and loyalty they too bore their sacred Majesties. Indeed, if this were not a narrative of great events, I should have much to say concerning those brother-pages of mine, some of whom died very gloriously afterwards fighting for their King.

However, the next morning I served the Mass for the Queen's chaplain in her private chapel, which was thronged beyond the doors by courtiers and ladies, for her Majesty's religion, as the Roundheads complained, was much in the fashion.

But most I remember the Queen's figure in the royal pew, with a veil hiding her beauty, and her attitude one of the most touching devotion. So true is it that we love our dear faith the more as it is vilified and persecuted by the wicked.

And from that day my dear mistress sought to have me near her person; and often was I privileged to be in attendance upon her Majesty at moments when she was with her royal consort and their children, and so witnessed how sweet a felicity love may make even in the shadow of unnatural hatred, rebellion, and all rancors.

Also at times I rode with her Majesty in the park of St. James, for in the streets it was not safe for her to show her person—alas that I should say it! for those hypocrites had so inflamed the popular mind.

Whether these favors would have won me jealousy and dislike I do not know, had it not been that I was of the Queen's religion, which seemed cause enough. Moreover, the love between me and my brother-pages grew every day.

My Lady Joan took early occasion to tell her Majesty of Tom Dale and his quarrel with Sir Thomas Fairfax's fellows. And her Majesty, who was more playful than her little princes, would have Tom to an audience, and thereby would no doubt have given scandal to a court less loyal and more strait-laced.

Honest Tom was at first overcome in the royal presence, but in time found tongue to give an account of his adventure at the inn, to which the Queen listened, laughing till she was wet-eyed.

Then she asked him if it pleased him to be at court.

"Aye, your Majesty," said Tom, "it hath but one drawback."

"And pray what is that?" asked the Queen, while I shook with apprehension for what Tom might say next.

"'Tis too much of a sameness," said Tom, "for every man will throw up his hat for the King, and every woman will die for him. So that mine arm goeth stiff, and my cudgel may go worm-eaten for all the use I shall have of him. Also," went on my knave, "I have learned to use a short sword like a gentleman, and am driven to lunge with it at the rat-holes, calling upon any rat that will come forth and not shout for their Majesties. In faith," added Tom, "they may take me to Bedlam, if so be I am a man of peace much longer."

Just then the King came and was surprised at Tom Dale's presence ; but the hon-

est fellow kissed his hand with such fervor that I could see he had won favor with the King. The Queen, too, related to him in French my rogue's complaint, whereupon the King came as near laughing as ever he did.

"Are there many like you, Master Dale," he asked, "in your country, so affected towards us and against our enemies, and so ready to fight our battles?"

"I could name you an hundred as stout," said Tom.

"Why, then, that is a good hearing," said the King, "and presently, I fear, we shall need all your love."

And then he gave his hand to Tom to kiss.

Never indeed have I seen a rough fellow so affected as was Tom Dale at the honor which had been done to him, and the uppermost thought in his mind seemed to be the desire that his old Granny should hear of it.

"Why, so she shall, Tom," said I.

"Not from me, master," said my rogue seriously, "for it is borne in on me I shall die in the King's cause. But wilt promise me she shall hear it all, even to the 'good Master Dale' of her Majesty?"

He imitated the Queen's pretty mincing speech so comically that I had laughed out but that I saw tears in the rogue's eyes. So I even promised as he wished, and was amused afterwards to see with what a new importance he carried himself.



## CHAPTER IV.

### WE GO FORTH TO BATTLE.

No doubt there were many sweet and pleasant days between my coming to court and the troubles that came after ; but so thick lies the cloud of calamity between me and them that I can scarce see them for the dark.

Not overlong was my acquaintance with the Palace of Whitehall. For in the autumn of the year the country was plunged in civil war, and so pressing was the need of protecting the Queen's person that she was removed out of London and abode for a time at Hampton Court on the river banks while the King's majesty raised the royal standard in the north.

Then her Majesty was all hopefulness : defeat and disaster were words unknown to her high and gentle spirit, and many a time

while we walked in the pleasant formal gardens of the Palace would she forecast the success of the King's arms and lay down for his generals a plan of tactics which would have done credit to Prince Rupert himself.

This, plainly, was how matters stood at the beginning of the war. The west and the north stood loyal as one man, always excepting the town of Hull, which was on the side of the Parliament, and was garrisoned. In the south and the east the Parliament had a following larger indeed than at first we had believed ; and the city of London was traitorous. Indeed, before her Majesty left her own palace there were found knaves to cry without the walls, "Privilege of Parliament ! Privilege of Parliament !" as pert as any parrot I ever heard.

Her Majesty slipped away by water from the disloyal city to Hampton Court, and there abode one winter in quietness, much chequered by reports of the battles as we heard them, and by our fears for the King's safety, for his Majesty was one that would not have the meanest of his subjects dare for him what he would not dare for himself.

The day before the King set forth he had

summoned me to an audience, and well I remember that there was present the Marquis of Hertford, a nobleman very dear to the King, with whom he had cousinship indeed, and a likeness in tastes so that either was happy in polishing an ode or trimming a sonnet; and the two well loved the arts of music and painting. Moreover, the Marquis also was grave and gracious and had a most winning presence, as the poor Lady Arabella Stuart well knew. And like the King, the Marquis had a right noble contempt of fear and cravenness; but if it be not disloyal to say that any King's man excelled the King, he was more wise in tactics and generalship. He was governor to the young prince, and now was to take command of the army of the west.

"Sir Lancelot Tregarthen," said the King, after I had kissed hands, "we have sent for you, that you may hear from our own lips why it is we have refused such excellent and faithful services when we need stout arms and brave and loyal hearts near our person. You have guessed our reason, perhaps?"

"Yes, your Majesty," I said in a low voice. "I had thought I **was** reserved for

another and as sacred a duty. Indeed, I had awaited your Majesty's pleasure in the matter were it not that my heart cried out to be near your Majesty if danger should come."

"Why," said the King, with a lightening of his face, "you are not the only one, Sir Lancelot. Despite the things they say against us we have yet loving hearts ready to sacrifice all in our service."

"An hundred thousand and more," I cried out.

"Yet listen, Sir Lancelot: you, I have reserved for a dearer service. Think you not there will be danger where our consort is? She is not of the woman-stuff to bend before the storm and let it sweep over her. Nay, sweet as she is, she is as much man as any in England."

"That I know, your Majesty."

"And knowing it, Sir Lancelot, you will understand that we place you near the Queen in guard. You are her favorite page. We make you now captain of her guard. Keep her, Sir Lancelot, from danger without. I would I might add, keep her from the danger of her own lofty spirit."

"The Queen will be Queen still," I said

soberly, for dazzled as I was by the King's trust and my own advancement, I discerned the difficulty of my task.

"Whatever happens," said the King, "we shall rest more easy knowing the Queen has faithful friends at hand."

He turned, gravely smiling, to my Lord Hertford.

"Sir Lancelot Tregarthen," he said, "though young in years is old in discretion. We have appointed him Captain Danby to be with him to pilot his youth through stormy waters, if needs be, but we have entire trust in his love and devotion to us and our consort, and in his readiness to strike, and his discretion to withhold at the right times."

I remember that as I went out leaving him and my Lord Hertford together I mused upon the cruelty of things whereby this King, so fitted by his arts and accomplishments as well as by his truly kingly nature to adorn courts, should be flung upon a rough and turbulent time, and among them unfitted by nature to love his gentle qualities. And yet what qualities of courage, of steadfastness, of patience and endurance this

very adversity proved in his sacred Majesty, so that never yet was king so greatly loved.

Indeed, but only some months had passed ere the Queen, my mistress, grew restive at the spinet and the broidery frame, and as the days went and this unnatural war but lengthened itself out, I have seen her stand and stamp with her tiny heel at her own thoughts, and lifting her delicate head gaze away from her as though she listened, thereby reminding me of the very usage of my barb, which conformed to that of the war-horse mentioned in the Scriptures.

At last when it was come to full summer she would go and none could keep her. His Majesty was at this time between Oxford and London, not so far away, but a dangerous stretch of country between, as it was held by the Earl of Essex's men, and if we rode that way we were as likely to fall into the hands of the Roundheads as the Cavaliers. And though at this time their hatred to the Queen had not reached that extremity which afterwards it did, and they had not hitherto tried to capture her person, yet I trembled to think of the insults she might be sub-

jected to if she were to fall in the hands of some of those fanatics.

Still she would be gone, and so one night we crossed the river silently, and finding our horses the other side, set out over the sleeping country designing to make our way northward by a course well to the eastward of the armies.

I rode the barb, but I noticed that her Majesty was mounted on a palfrey which had better become one of her women, for she liked a spirited mount, and a charger had better suited her.

Some of our men had gone ahead leading horses, and there were of our party only myself and Captain Danby, Tom Dale, and another stout fellow, for we feared to attract attention by too large a cavalcade.

At daybreak we halted in a copse not far from Hatfield and partook of food. There I saw for the first time how great a change the Queen had made in her looks and attire. She had smoothed her pretty hair down by her ears, and her riding dress was sad-colored. She wore the deep collar and cuffs affected by the Roundheads, and albeit her eye sparkled with her laughter, she could

in a moment pull a prodigiously long face, and affect a canting and snuffling manner of speech, such as belonged to those rebels. Now I understood the reason of her pal-frey.

"I am Mistress Comfort Jenkins," she said, "if we fall into the hands of these Roundheads, and I am fleeing like many another from the plague, which has again made its appearance in London. I go to my uncle, the saintly Master Unctius-and-Holiness-in-the-Lord Jenkins at the University town of Cambridge, and you, Sir Lancelot, are my brother, and Captain Danby here is my major-domo ; and since it is not wise for godly maidens to risk a meeting with malignants, there are a couple of men of the city train-bands who accompany me through the offices of my worthy uncle's friend, Master Praise-God-Barebones."

I was in a marvel at her till I remembered how greatly her Majesty had excelled in stage-plays, which was one of the charges these Roundheads brought against her.

And so while we rested, very prettily did she teach us what parts we were to assume in case of a surprise. But Tom Dale, who



had grumbled much at assuming the crop-ears' garb, asked her Majesty:

"And shall I not cut any fellow over the head who doubts me to be a Roundhead, your Majesty?"

Which question amused the Queen mightily.

We rested in that coppice till it was dark and then pushed on, choosing the fields rather than the roads, and after a night's riding were come into friendly country where our great danger was from our own friends whom our garb should deceive.

For this reason we deemed it prudent still to advance with great caution, and so we came in time to the camp of my Lord Newcastle, and had like to be shot for a party of Roundheads but that there was a lady in the midst of us.

Yet the Queen, out of her high spirits, would not have us declare we were Cavaliers, and so we were hustled by a band of stout fellows even to the door of the tent where my Lord sat at wine with his officers.

And my Tom, being a quarrelsome fellow, alarmed me lest he should be slashed over the head, and certainly he would have

been so but that those who captured us were veterans and not hot-headed.

But said one, jeering:

"You shall hang as high as Aman, yea, verily," mocking us with the Puritan drone, which set the Queen to laughing heartily.

Then you should have seen those good fellows when, being come with their captives to the Earl's tent, the Queen called out very gayly: "My Lord of Newcastle, my Lord of Newcastle," and the Earl coming forth in haste straightway knelt in the muddy place by the tent-door, to the detriment of the lace ruffles which fell at his knee, and kissed the Queen's hand.

Then she pointed out the leading man of her captors and cried out to my Lord that he was to have the next company, because of his vigilance and courtesy; and then lit down from her palfrey and found under her feet the Earl's cloak of velvet which he had flung for her, whereupon she rallied him, saying that he but copied an old compliment of Master Walter Raleigh's to Queen Bess.

That evening you could not have believed you were in camp and on the eve of battle, for whereas a woman's presence is a hin-

drance and a heavy thought to all true gentlemen in such a place, and this was the first woman of the realm, and so most precious, yet her coming seemed to bring nothing but joy and hope. So may the coming of the holy maid Joan of Arc have inspirited the French in those old wars.

And if I had loved my dear mistress before, when she abode in courts and bowers, much more did I love her now for her right queenly and undaunted front in face of perils.

So we sat to dinner with my Lord Newcastle and his officers, and amid flowers and lights and silver and fine napery, it was easy to forget that our feet were on the sward, except indeed her Majesty's, for though she declared she would fare like any soldier of them, the Earl made so earnest a prayer that his cloak might be her footstool that at length she right sweetly yielded.

## CHAPTER V.

### OUR TROUBLES COME FASTER.

JUST one glimpse more of the Queen while yet our hopes held, and then the years go under a pall. I would I could keep her for you as she rode the morning of Atherton Moor with the Earl of Newcastle to review the army. The Queen had not forgotten the woman so much that her wardrobe was left behind; for, as I learned, one of the led horses we had sent north before us carried cases for the Queen's adorning.

So it was that when she rode out on the black charger the Earl had placed at her service she had laid by her sad-colored garments for a habit of murrey velvet. Her girdle was gold set with gems, and in her feathered hat was a diamond star. And yet she looked right soldierly, for by her side hung a sword of fine steel, damascened with gold, and at her heels were little gold spurs,

and there was a case of pistols in her saddle-flap, so that it was no wonder the Cavaliers shouted as one man that the Queen should lead them.

That, too, she had the spirit to do, but that my Lord's entreaties dissuaded her, and perhaps even more the compunction she felt for me when she witnessed my distress, for I could have torn my hair when I thought of her flung on the waves of battle. Yet perhaps, after all, what moved her most was the Earl's reasoning that her presence in their ranks would make every Cavalier think only of her safety, which she had the wit to perceive and the wisdom to be moved by.

As it was, we watched the battle from a height, and many a time it brought my heart to my mouth when a rain of bullets blew our way, or a shell from a distance ploughed the ground before our feet. Yet the Queen on her black charger sat motionless, and spoke but once, and then it was to utter a most sweet apology to us that she had disappointed us of the battle.

It was a strange scene as ever I remember. Where we stood through the hours the sun lay on a meadow fast turning ripe, and

starred with the greater white daisies, with here and there the rosy purple of the clover-blossom. Near us in overhanging elms the birds sang undismayed, though, as the hours passed, the conflict of men and horses beneath was hidden from us by the smoke of powder, which was sharp in our nostrils.

I dare swear we watched six good hours and stirred no more than a cavalcade of stone. Then at last there came staggering to us out of the smoke a Roundhead so begrimed and bloody that he presented a wild aspect. Then for the first time I heard the Queen cry aloud, for she thought surely the day was lost. And I had nigh drawn upon the man when he flung his arms about the neck of my barb, and cried out ere he swooned that the day was ours. Then I recognized as he tumbled at our feet Tom Dale, whom I had lost earlier in the day.

The Queen then, lighting down beside him, lifted his head, and cried to me for water, which I fetching in my hat from a little well close by, he was soon brought to.

Indeed he opened his eyes with an extraordinary suddenness, and sitting upright, called out in the Queen's face :

"The Fairfaxes fly, they fly ! But mark you, Madam the Queen, that I have chopped like a ripe apple the skull of him that would not shout for the King."

Whereupon the Queen laughed and sobbed, the stress of the day being over, and cried out that the King himself should raise Master Dale to be an esquire.

And as Tom said we found to be true, for my Lord Fairfax and his son, Sir Thomas, had been in the rout from Atherton Moor.

Alas, afterwards 'twas one long tale of calamity. The King would have my Lord of Newcastle join forces with him to march on London, but the Earl was faint-hearted or too careful and would not ; so once again did the King's gallantry and wisdom come to naught because of the backsliding of them that followed him. Then his Majesty fought at Gloster and was defeated, and again at Newbury, where he met the Earl of Essex, and lost the day ; and alas ! one of the noblest heads in England fell that day.

This was my Lord Falkland, a noble of as stainless an honor as may be found in this mortal world. Likewise of a brilliant learn-

ing, and dear to his Majesty as much by reason of his love for the liberal sciences as for his sweetness of personal character. He was one of those—and there were many such in the civil war—certainly created by God to adorn a time of peace, and, alack ! born into rough times, and destined to be mere provender for the sword and food for powder.

He had much lore, and, brave soldier though he was, yearned but for the delights of love and learning of the arts, and that he might serve God and the King. It was observed early in these troubles that my Lord Falkland's beauty took upon it the shadow of doom, and I have heard it related that when he knew not eyes were upon him sighs would break as from his heart, and he would cry aloud, "Peace, peace !"

On the morning of the battle of Newbury this excellent gentleman clad himself as for his wedding, and took great pains with the adorning of his person. Some one having remonstrated with him that his white satin and silver was no garb for the field of battle, he smiled that quiet and gracious smile which often I had observed admiring. "Nay," he said, "I dress for no mortal man,



but I have a prevision that I shall see my God this night." And so it happened.

Thus fell one of the greatest bulwarks the King had against the Parliament, for not his most ravening enemy could assail the integrity of my Lord Falkland, whom we held on our side somewhat as those persecutors held Mr. Hampden.

Truly, the King had much sorrow. The Queen had joined him at Oxford in the winter of 1644. The University city had proved most loyal to his cause, and had been indeed his city of refuge and his headquarters during these troubles.

While we were with him there came news of the terrible disaster at Marston Moor, whereby, owing to an error of judgment on the part of Prince Rupert, the Cavaliers were entirely defeated.

These trials, one after another, the King bore with noble resignation and unquenched spirit.

He had barely had time to understand the magnitude of the defeat when there came riding into Oxford that Prince whom I had desired to serve under, with his gallant colors dim, and his martial bearing ob-

scured under sorrow and trouble, as much as his person was disfigured by mud and the stains of the battle and the weariness of hard riding and the dangers he had passed.

I chanced to be in attendance on the Queen in the King's presence when the Prince came. It was a chill day of lowering skies, but the tapestried chamber was lit by a leaping fire of driftwood, near which their Majesties sat and conversed in low tones. The King had given me some dispatches to set in order, and I sat at a distance from them in the square window of the chamber, yet could not but notice how their Majesties held hands as they conversed, and how near were those heads in whose locks, alas! the snows of an untimely winter had begun to be sprinkled.

Suddenly the door was flung open, and unannounced a Cavalier in riding dress entered and flung himself on his knees before the King.

His back being towards me I did not for a moment recognize the Prince Palatine, of Bohemia, but I saw his Majesty's face as he bent towards the kneeling figure, and it was lit up with that rare tenderness and melan-

choly that made so much of its beauty, and which, alas ! not even Master Vandyck could keep for this bereft world.

"Why, Rupert," he said, raising the Prince, "not at our feet, but here by the Queen and us is the place of our most splendid soldier."

"Alas, my liege," said the Prince, and I could have sworn I heard him sob, "I have lost you the day because I would not take a wiser man's counsel."

"Many days have you gained," said the King, "by this same hot-headedness. God willed that our enemies should prevail against us ; but I praise His name that He has saved us you."

He then kissed the Prince on both cheeks, and leading him to the Queen, she also spoke sweet words to him and comforted him. Indeed, rarely have I seen a sight so tender as the royal consorts forgetting their own grief in kindness to their friend. And true indeed it was, that though he lost us Marston Moor, yet no jewel of the King shed so brilliant a light on his reign and his cause as this same glorious Prince of Bohemia.

I looked in vain towards my mistress, the

Queen, for my dismissal, but they seemed to have forgotten me at my scrivener's in the window-place.

"Alack," I heard Prince Rupert say, "not only have I lost your Majesty the day, but I have lost you Newcastle as well, Sire."

"What?" cried the King, frowning very angrily, "has my Lord Newcastle left us?"

"He has taken ship for abroad. He was wroth with me when I would not listen to his wisdom, and let those knaves fall asunder by their own rottenness. So have I lost your Majesty a most valiant friend and general."

He dropped his face between his hands, but the King touched him lightly on the shoulder.

"Tush, Rupert!" he said, "friends do not go in times like these. My Lord Newcastle was impatient to be gone."

"He left behind him all his revenues, Sire, his great wealth and estates. He has gone forth a beggar. Yet I can well believe he sighed to be gone."

"He will make sonnets with Willie Davenant," said the King bitterly, "and forget our extremity. His wealth was good while it lasted, but he will be happy to sit in the

sun with a beggar's scrip if need be, and make his verses and read his dead poets. Many a gentleman as scholarly as my Lord Newcastle has our love brought into these untoward days, yet the others endure—endure or die," he said ; and I thought he remembered my Lord Falkland.

But I saw tears in the Queen's eyes, because she had been with my Lord Newcastle on that day of triumph, and had known how splendid and generous as well as valiant he was. Besides, one blow upon another might well lie heavy awhile upon her spirit, fine thing though it was. However, she said nothing, and his Majesty proudly forbore to speak further upon the Earl. But both their Majesties were joined to render honor to the Prince Palatine and to make him forget, if that might be, the injury his rashness had inflicted on their cause so long as he remained ; for this dear and splendid Prince Rupert was ever but a stormy petrel of war, nor was long happy except he was in the roar and thunder of it.

That winter the King met the leaders of the Parliament many times at Uxbridge, in the house which since is called the Treaty

House, but could come to no settlement with them, they being determined to strip him of so much of his royal prerogative and dignity. Much should I have liked to ride with his Majesty when he went forth of Oxford on these errands, but he had laid it on me as a sacred duty that I should keep guard over the Queen, who was this winter in less than her usual health and spirits.

About that time we began to hear much of that arch-malcontent, Oliver Cromwell of Huntingdon, of whom the shrewd said that he would surely one day over-top the Parliamentarians, as a stout oak a forest of saplings. And this might be, since the years which had been so bitter to us had robbed them of Mr. Pym and Mr. Hampden: and of these two I believe it that had they lived, the terrible and tragic end to our struggle had never come to pass.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE KING'S TRUST.

It was a miry and gloomy day in the January of 1645, and Oxford, I well remember, was full of the river mist, when there came a mounted messenger with dispatches for the King. He was at table with the Queen when he opened them, and reading the first, I saw him for the only time dissolve in tears.

The Queen ran to him with anxious love. For her own part, I believe she was become so acquainted with sorrow and disaster that she expected naught else.

"Laud is dead," he said, and his voice was like the tolling of a mournful bell.

"Alas," she cried, "the great Archbishop!" And yet I could not help feeling that her grief was for the King's grief and the King's friend rather than for personal sorrow of her own.

"First Strafford," he cried out bitterly, "and now Laud: and their only crime that they loved me. And next it will be Charles Stuart. There is nothing they will not dare."

"They have killed him," cried the Queen, and her voice trembled with its wrath; for at first I think she had believed that the Archbishop, being old, had died of the hardships of his long imprisonment.

"They have killed him," echoed the King; "and I could not save him, as I could not save Strafford. Well it had been for me if I, too, had laid down my head under the axe that slew my Strafford! Alas and alas for the venerable head that now lies where that comely head once lay!"

Then the Queen, seeing him so overcome, drew him gently with her into an inner chamber, and we who had been moved to tears at his Majesty's suffering saw no more.

But after that the gloom settled down on the King, and the rare smile we knew of old came no more. For the shadow of his own end was come upon him; and I think he never forgot to grieve that his friends had died for him. And even to me who had not



known the great Archbishop in the days of his pride and his power the news was heavy. To think they could not spare him who had endured so patiently insult and imprisonment even into the snows of age, and who died so nobly that any heart of stone might rue the same. "For," said he, hearing he was to die, "there is none so anxious for my death as am I for my going:" and surely purged by his martyrdom his pride and sometime severity in the day of power.

Nor could I forget that the sacred things of my religion, which had been spat upon and profaned, and were hated so by those sour zealots of the Parliament, were held by the Archbishop in tender reverence, so that one of their cries against him was that he was secretly a Papist.

Even themselves who could not relent to spare his venerable life knew him great, as was said by the attorney Wilde who prosecuted him they had already condemned: "This man is like Naaman the Syrian, a great man but a great leper."

In the spring of that year there came secret dispatches to the King from Prince Rupert. His Majesty was tired, I think, of

this treaty-making which came to nothing, and had too long endured the sour faces of that crew of hypocrites, beside which the saddle and the air of the battle-field seemed sweet after this winter of sorrow and low weather.

He summoned me to his private chamber after the bearer of the dispatches had left him. He looked more eager and alert than I had seen him since the day that brought the news of his grace of Canterbury's end.

"Sir Lancelot Tregarthen," he said, "it is now some years that you have been in our service and have shown yourself ever vigilant, faithful, and loving."

"I am that, my liege," I said.

"We have found you wise beyond your years," he went on, "as was proved when you were entrusted with the Queen's safety, and did convey her safely even through an enemy's country to friends. And since then you have been much in our sight, and we have had no fault to find with you, nor has the Queen."

I stood silent, being so overcome with the sweetness of his praise that I did not think to wonder what was coming.

Suddenly the King came forward and put his hand on my shoulder.

"Think you not," he said tenderly, "that I do not know what it has cost young blood, aye, and valiant blood, to wait on a woman's pleasure, even though that woman be the Queen, when there is fighting to be done? And possible glory, and at worst an heroic death waiting for every lad with a stout heart and a strong sword-arm? Believe me, I know."

"Alas!" I cried out, for he had touched a secret sore with me. "It has cost me much. There have been moments when the battle has called so sweetly to me that it has taken all my manhood to stay."

The King bowed his head.

"You have rendered us truer service than many who have bled for us, and believe me, sir, Charles Stuart is not ungrateful. You are a poor gentleman, Sir Lancelot Tregarthen?"

"A mere soldier of fortune, your Majesty."

"Ah, well, at this hour we are more like to empty our friends' coffers than to fill them. Yet if our misfortunes should take a

turn, and I think the tide of them is almost full, you shall be my Lord Tregarthen, with a revenue to build up your lost estate. And if I repay you not, then them who shall come after me to punish these malcontents shall have it in trust."

I tried to say that I was the King's man, and his trust enough for me without rewards or titles; but he went on, barely heeding me.

"Our nephew," he said, "has summoned us to his side, and we go almost at once. Once again, Sir Lancelot Tregarthen, we leave you the Queen in charge. So long as things remain as they are she is safe in Oxford. The loyal young gentlemen of the University will rally to her as one man. But by and by there may be peril. Rupert hears that my Lord of Essex is like to sit down before Oxford walls. If news should come of the march of his army, the Queen must fly. She shall not spend the hour of her woman's extremity in a beleaguered city. For the present let her rest here; but be you watchful as her hound, Sir Lancelot, and if there is a whisper of danger let the horses stand saddled by day and night. To your discretion we trust the rest."

"Shall I have a guard, your Majesty?"

"If you will, Sir Lancelot; but if you are to convoy the Queen, 'twould be as well to travel with as little company as possible. 'Twill be a matter for guile and cunning rather than for a show of force. I do not think they would dare harm her if she were to fall into their hands; but none can say how much longer they will or will not dare. Get her to the loyal west, Sir Lancelot, and to a seaport town, whence she may embark for her own country if the need should come."

"All that I will do, your Majesty," I cried with fervor, "God helping me!"

"Then perhaps," he said, smiling a little, "when her Majesty is laid in safety with her mother, the Queen-mother, she may spare you to our standard—if then it be flying," he added, as a mournful after-thought.

The next day the King left us.

After he had gone 'twas weary waiting while the hot, rich days of the summer waxed. I well remember how the grass ripened and shed its seeds in the college gardens, and was mown and lay in swaths, the smell of which kept my head aching at

night, for I did not sleep for watching lest peril to her Majesty should arise.

And at the height of that summer season there came ill news, for the battle of Naseby was fought and lost.

I was walking with her Majesty in Christ Church meadows, which at that season are full of the purple fritillary, when the messenger found us. And with the ill news there came a warning that it was time for us to be gone, for they would break the King's last stronghold in England and leave him no resting-place.

"You have heart for it, your Majesty?" I asked.

"Rather, Sir Lancelot," she said, "I have so little heart that I have heart for all things, for it seems to me no greater harm can befall us."

I was grieved to the soul to see my dear mistress so cast down, she who had been wont to endure hardships and reverses with so manful a spirit. And it seemed to me best we should be gone at once, for I knew she was even yet of so fine a metal that she rang true when a call was made upon her. Yet I prayed her to be of good heart, for,

said I, there are yet the Scots under the Marquis of Montrose. But she shook her head and would not be comforted.

We were to go in disguise, the Queen as a plain country lady, riding to be with her mother who abode in a quiet by-way of Devon, her husband a captain of London train-bands, having his hands overfull to guard his wife on her journey. Therefore he had sent her under the guard of a young chirurgeon, to wit myself, with three fellows able to hold their own with any malignant that ever was. And indeed since the Parliament now held the country there was little to fear except from broken gentlemen of fortune, who, having lost all in the King's service, must needs take the road for a livelihood.

For fear of these ostensibly my fellows went armed, but I had little fear of them, but only that a rumor might spread that the Queen had left Oxford, and a watch be kept for her on the road.

For this reason we resolved to leave secretly after nightfall, thus escaping the ardent loyalty of the young gentlemen of the University, who would, we knew, make such

a parting with the Queen that the rumor of it might well spread and cause the thing we dreaded. Indeed they had declared openly that if the Queen found Oxford no longer safe, they would march with her to the confines of the kingdom; which would have been a pretty thing indeed, for while the Round-heads swooped on us on the one hand, they would be also free to steal into Oxford by the back door, finding none to guard it.

I had procured a coach for the Queen, of an ancient cut but comfortable, without arms or escutcheon, which were vanities those rebels set themselves above. And since Dobbs, the Queen's coachman, was a familiar face to many in the kingdom, and besides a fat and pursy man of such weight that he could only win in a tussle by falling upon his enemy, we e'en left the poor man behind.

Tom Dale took his place in a coachman's coat of many capes and stained with the weather, and we others assumed the steeple hats, the belted surcoats, and deep bands of the Puritans.

And so we went forth on a starless night, with none to bid us "God speed" save only



the captain of the guard, who ushered us sadly forth from the westward gate of the city. And fain would I have taken one of the Queen's ladies, but that it had made our responsibility greater. So once again my dear mistress committed herself to my charge. But alas! that night I could not but remember how gayly she had ridden north with us, who now was sad and patient and untimely old: and the latter I was grown to be myself, by reason of many griefs and anxieties, so that none, even my nearest, could have recognized in me the lad who had left Lily's Leaf with so high a heart and unforboding a spirit.

## CHAPTER VII.

### AN ADVENTURE OF THE ROAD.

I RODE by the Queen's coach, and that first night out I think she slept and forgot her sorrows. I knew Tom Dale drove his horses as carefully as one might carry a young child, and I loved him for his gentleness, which was much needed since the roads were rough and the coach scarce designed for ill usage. But it may be believed that ambling softly we went but slow, and I was right glad we feared no pursuit. Still I was put to it to check the impatience of my barb, so that now and again when we had an open road I gave him a brisk canter ahead, returning to report that the way was clear and no sign of danger ahead.

Fortunately in my lazy days at court I had been able to spare the barb, so that he kept undiminished his youth and fire, and every day grew more dear to me. A good

horse is as true a friend as a man may have; and my Achmet, as I had called him, was beyond praise, and leal to death—ah, yes, leal to death.

It was right pleasant weather, and all the woods in leaf and in song, and glad I was that our flight took place in summer, for thereby we were enabled to avoid the inns, which for us were dangerous places. The greenwood made indeed as pleasant a sleeping-room and a hall as ever I saw; and when one awoke in the morning to the delicious singing of birds and the tender airs and the warm wind and the sweet fragrance, it was easy to forget the sadness we had known, and to hope and trust for the immediate day, and the future beyond.

Even the Queen's heart was lifted up, though we knew his Majesty by this time a fugitive; and I saw her almost merry when the second morning she emerged from her tiring-room, which we had fitted up with our horse cloths hung between two trees, behind which a little rill trickled into a basin of green. She slept in her coach, which was equipped for her comfort, and breakfasted on the moss, starved finer than

ever was damask with harebells and saxifrage. And she would honor me by having me to her table, while Tom and the two postilions feasted at a distance. And right glad was I to see that she bore her fatigues so bravely. Indeed, I think, with the rest of us, she was better for being astir and out of the sadness which lay upon Oxford and its golden languorous weather.

We rode for two days without adventure. On the third night we met with highwaymen, a meeting which even yet, after all the sadness, makes me merry to think upon.

It was a night of white moonlight, and for some hours we had been travelling across a moor which afforded shelter only to the moorhen or the ouzel, and we had ridden later than usual in the hopes to come upon some such wood of refuge as that in which we had slept last night.

I had ridden ahead some distance from the coach, and espied at length a shadow of trees where the ground fell sharply away, so putting my barb at a canter I trotted along merrily in hopes the place would serve.

I had almost reached it when there rode out of the shadow of the wood two black

fellows on horseback, with vizors concealing all but the white of their eyes. "Stand and surrender!" shouted one in a great jolly voice, which seemed well-known to me, though at the moment I could not remember where I had heard it. And the other, a shorter fellow, made a lunge at me with his sword, and caracoled his horse, which was black with a white star on the forehead, very prettily in front of me.

Now I had an idea that if I could unmask my gentlemen there might be some sport, and I was right glad that they did not in the first place clap a pistol at my ear, and no more about it. So I just whipped out my sword of Toledo, and for the next five minutes there was as pretty a bit of sword-play between me and the shorter of the two highwaymen as one might wish to see.

The bigger fellow meanwhile sat his horse in the moonlight like an image of bronze, except that now and again he applauded one or the other of us as I have seen ladies do at the play-house, with as negligent an air.

But I had not much time for diversion, as any minute might bring the rumble of the coach; so, with a very delicate manœuvre,

I lifted my adversary's mask on the point of my steel and flung it away from me, and so successfully was the trick performed that it had well pleased my old fencing master, Monsieur Dampier, to see it, for I had not by so much as a pin-prick injured the skin.

The bigger highwayman gave a great roar of a laugh.

"Faith, Dick," he said, "this crop-ear fights like a gentleman, or the devil. I have seldom seen anything so prettily done."

And then stepping forward he bowed very politely to me and said:

"Will you do me, sir, the honor to cross swords with me?"

Then I knew my two men for my old brother-pages, Tom Selby and Dick Lowndes, whom we had called Damon and Pythias at court for their fondness for each other's company, though both were much changed, and I should hardly have known them at first but for Tom's great voice.

So I dropped my sword very sharp, and said I, with a snuffle:

"That will I not, Sir Highwayman, for I am a man of peace, yet learned swordsmanship before my eyes were opened to the truth,

of an old fencing master that lodged above Master Truefitt's the tailor's, nigh St. Clement Dane's, where I served my apprenticeship."

Now the flapping brim of my Round-head's hat was over my face, and in the moonlight I trusted to escape recognition. And watching them narrowly I saw that so far I was safe.

Tom Selby again roared with laughter, and 'twas like the bellow of a bull, so that I prayed the coach was not close up lest they should take alarm and the jest be spoiled.

"Why, you are the very king of snips," said he, "and wasted sitting cross-legged on a bench. Why not join our merry company and pitch your sad-faced crew to the deuce?"

"That may not be, Sir Highwayman," I said, whining, "for I am a godly man; and if time served I would wish to expound a chapter to you and your fellow-sinner. But I have more immediate duties."

"What duties, Sir Snip?" said one of the rogues, mimicking me, and I could see they were rolling about on their horses with laughter.

Then Dick Lowndes, who was ever an imp

of mischief, cried out that they hungered to hear me expound a chapter, and would have me light down on the ground "where," said he, "you can cross your legs and believe yourself breeches-making, and even so," he went on, "repair the rents in our garment of righteousness."

"Nay," said I, "that may not be, for I am convoying Mistress Prudence Budgin, wife of my friend Captain Valiant-in-the-Faith Budgin of the London train-bands, to abide a while with her mother in the valley of the Exe."

"And where is the lady?" cried my highwaymen.

"Alas, gentlemen," said I, "she is close at hand, for I hear even now the rumble of her coach."

The two gentlemen immediately became serious and looked to the priming of their pistols.

"You are not alone, then?" said one.  
"How many in the party?"

"Three men besides myself and the lady."

"Armed?"

"Why, yes, we travel armed, but we are men of peace."



"Ha," said one to the other, "'tis two to one. Let us bind this rogue."

"Ah, no, gentlemen," I cried out, as though in mortal terror, "do not bind me, I pray. Let me go in peace, and I will deliver up to you the treasure the lady carries, which is three hundred guineas in gold, all sewn in the lining of her coach."

Then Dick Lowndes struck me with the flat of his sword and cried out that I was a cowardly dog and unfit to have charge of beauty, and Tom Selby shouted:

"And to think, Dick, thou should'st have crossed swords with this very dastard of a snip!"

"Will thy men not fight?" asked Dick very sternly.

"They are in my pay," said I, "and they know nothing of the treasure. If ye will give me my part, Sir Highwaymen, they will not fight."

"Why God help this lady!" said Tom Selby. "She has indeed fallen among thieves. And it were an enterprise for us, Dick, to rescue beauty in distress."

"She will fight like any cat," cried I.

"Why, then, 'tis all the worse," said they,

"she should be in such rascally hands. Yet Roundhead guineas were a right-fitting prize for King's men, and we are not free even to meddle. She shall dance with us by moonlight and then go her way, guinealess. But swear, knave, swear, you will show her no treachery!"

"That will I," cried I, "for if her godly spouse suspected foul play he would run me through, being a cholerick man. But my guineas, gentlemen?"

"You shall have them, rascal," they cried, "and here comes the coach!"

"Fall back, fall back," I entreated, "and let me speak with my fellows."

"Go then," said Tom Selby, with an oath, "and at the first sign of foul play we fire."

I then went forward and instructed my men, and whispered to the Queen who the highwaymen were. So when they rode down upon us our postilions ran away as if the devil were at their heels, and my Tom, who was ever ripe for a jest, flung down the reins and roared for mercy, while the Queen sobbed in her coach so that the highwaymen looked as foolish as if they had captured a pack of children.

However, they whipped off the reins, and tied Tom and me back to back, and then Dick Lowndes, advancing to the Queen, prayed her not to be alarmed.

"For," said he, "we are slaves of your sex, only obliged by circumstances to abjure the society of ladies. Wherefore," said he, "if you will tread a measure with me upon this velvety sward where many a fairy has danced before, we shall allow you to proceed, first relieving you of any watches, rings, bracelets, or such trinkets which might prove a temptation to the evil-disposed, of whom you will meet many in these wild days."

Then the Queen sobbed with her handkerchief to her eyes that she would not dance with him, but Dick insisting, she came out of her coach.

As she stepped into the moonlight a ring on her finger caught the light and broke it into a thousand rays.

"Why, here is a pretty gaud for a Puritan madam," cried Dick; and Tom Selby drew nearer at the words. "Let me see it closer, I pray."

Now, it was the Queen's ring of betrothal,

with the King's monogram in diamonds and a true lover's knot above, and the centre was a great ruby heart, and within it was writ:

"God in Trinity, bless our Unity."

"Why, who are you?" he cried, "that dare wear the Queen's ring?"

And at first, I think, he had no thought but that the ring had been stolen, or forced from the Queen, for indeed in those days no one knew what might have happened.

"Who should dare," said she, "but the Queen?" And withdrawing the cambric from her eyes she smiled on him, the smile which had made us all her slaves of old.

Then my two old brother-pages knelt before her and kissed her hands, and never saw I a man so ashamed and mum-chance as Dick Lowndes. And a pretty trick he served me in return; for while he pretended to unbind me he dealt me several very hard, albeit jocose, blows with the flat of his sword, counting them each as the guineas that were to have fallen to my share. So that at last I cried out for mercy, whereupon the Queen demanded to know if we thought we were

yet at court to be employed in such a rough boys' play.

And that night my old comrades would have us to a little inn on the borders of the wood, whereof the host was a King's man, and he and his comely wife overpowered to see the Queen.

And there we rested; and I was glad for her Majesty's sake that it need not be another night in the coach. Indeed, we were served right royally, and the Queen's wine poured in a golden goblet, and I pray I may never taste worse.

That night we slept in the finest of linen, and I arose mightily refreshed; and going forth from my chamber was glad to see her Majesty walking in the garden taking the air which blew sweetly over beds of sweet peas and clove-gillyflowers.

And that morning she had us to breakfast with her, myself and the two highwaymen; and a right merry meal it was. Indeed, so sweet was the place and so peaceful that it grieved us to leave it and go forth to we knew not what. I can still see the inn-parlor with its little windows opening from the garden, and the rosy trellis on its wall-

paper, and the trail of flowers on its curtains. So different it all seemed from the grim menace the future held for us.

And even to the kitchen-wench, they were in tears at parting from the Queen, so that her Majesty was much moved.

We grieved too to leave our two gentlemen of the road, who prayed indeed to ride with her Majesty to Exeter town, and were but dissuaded by the representations I made that it would add to our danger.

"For," said I, "it would draw the eyes of all the world if such a pair were seen to be of the company of the good train-band captain's wife. No, no," I said, "away with your love-locks and your ruffling it; ye are no company for godly folk!"

And so, most unwillingly, they saw us depart.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A HOME-COMING.

THE next night we lay at Lily's Leaf ; and a happiness it was to me that the Queen's room should once more receive a Queen. I had had no means of warning my aunt of the august guest she was to receive, but I knew that all love and loyalty could do to make up for poverty and unpreparedness would be done, and so much I said to the Queen.

"Ah, Master Lancelot," she sighed, "we have long ceased to care for matters of personal state and splendor, and would rather lay our heads on a straw pillow in the meanest cottage, so peace and love were there, than in palaces with rebellion knocking at the doors and insult kept at bay only by guards and walls. I pray his Majesty may sleep as well to-night !"

And then she sighed, as she had done much of late.

"Madam," said I boldly, "there was a

greater King who knew not where to lay His head."

"You are right, Master Lancelot," she answered sweetly, "and He knows where our consort rests to-night, though we do not."

I had never revisited Lily's Leaf in all these years, the times being so troublous and the distance a considerable one in such times. Yet they had found ways to let me know of the life there, and I feared no gap in the little circle of human beings I loved, though Selim and Saladin lay in their grassy graves within the park walls, and little Don had put aside his frolicking for a like ease.

Yet 'twas with a feeling of relief that, emerging from the maze of grassy lanes and skirting woodlands before the entrance-gate of Lily's Leaf, I found no breaks in the walls nor other trace of disturbance. For those destroyers had wasted many a noble mansion from mere wantonness of destruction and hatred of venerable things, even as they had sacrilegiously stabled their horses in God's houses throughout the land. But as I had dared to hope, the seclusion and also the poverty of Lily's Leaf had been its salvation.

When I shouted at the gate a very ancient



man came out, and seeing me there, a horseman, quivered with fear.

"What is your business, honorable sir?" he asked, "for here are no breakers of the peace, nor soldiers of any party, nor wealth, nor aggression, but only old men and helpless women, and poverty. Pray you then pass on your way."

"Why, Peter," I said, "have you forgotten me? Look closer and you will remember."

"It is never Master Lance!" he cried, between sobbing and laughing, "and grown great and strong, and in the garb of a Round-head?"

"That was necessary, Peter," said I. "I am conveying a great lady to a place of safety. If you will come to-morrow morning to the Hall, you will have the honor to kiss her hand."

For I was desirous of sparing her Majesty the emotion which she now seemed to suffer when it was brought home to her that yet there were true hearts in this England of ours, ready to suffer and die for her and the King.

"All well, Peter?" I asked, while he threw open the gates.

"As well as may be, master, with loyal folk in these unhappy times. And great comfort there will be in your coming, for we had well-nigh ceased to hope you would come at all, who for all we knew were dead in the King's cause with many another noble gentleman."

I waved my hand to the old fellow, and rode ahead. Now the Queen was safe within the park walls I felt easy in going before, not only to get the surprise of my own coming past, but that I might warn them of the coming of the Queen. So I put my Achmet to it and rode gayly across the park, leaping here a ha-ha and there a prickly hedge, till I was come very speedily to the door of Lily's Leaf.

I hammered upon it with all my might ; and as I waited memory was sharp within me, for from the moat there rose again the honeyed smell of the lilies as in that summer long ago.

It was moonlight now, and floods of silver light lay beyond the shadow of the house ; but here by the door all was darkness. I had lit down from my barb, and knowing he would come to my call when I needed him, I

suffered him to stray, picking the dewy grass as he went.

Presently there was a shuffling of feet behind the stout door, and it was opened a little way from the inside, yet held securely by a chain, while some one peeped out.

I knew our major-domo, old Rowantree, by the voice, though his face was in shadow.

"Go your way, good Master Puritan," he said acridly; "here is nothing to come for only poverty and old age. These wars have stripped us bare."

And would have shut the door in my face if I had not suddenly kissed his cheek as he stood peering forth through the chink.

"What!" I cried, "none of the cakes or sugared confections or cordial waters with which good Mistress Rowantree sent me forth four years ago this summer?"

"Why, God bless me, 'tis Sir Lancelot himself!" he cried, in a great hurry taking down the chain, and almost beside himself with sudden joy.

I embraced him as I stepped within the hall.

"Get out your best napery," I said, "and your wax lights and silver; for I know you

have these stored away in safe hiding. And set a great fire in the Queen's room, and see that all is made ready, for the Queen asks the hospitality of Lily's Leaf to-night."

"The Queen?" he cried, staring at me.

"Aye, the Queen. She will be here in half an hour. Go tell your wife."

And then left him to take in the surprising news, for I had no more time to wait, but hastened upstairs at a great pace, yet remembering from old habit where the stair was worm-eaten or there was a gap in the hand-rail.

So I came through the dark house to the door of the Blue Chamber, where my aunt sat of evenings, and opening the door softly passed within. At my end of the room was thick shadow. At the other burned a fire of wood, for the great room struck cold. There was a little table with two candles upon it, drawn within a screen close to the blaze, and there sat my Aunt Monica and Father John playing at chess, and close by I saw my sister. Her face was whiter than a lily against the black wood of the mantel-shelf, and her fingers yet held within the leaves of a book.

But something had ruffled her calm, as the wind ruffles the lilies, and she sat, with her chin lifted in air, an image of listening.

"Has the wind come into the room?" said my aunt, peering towards me through the shadows.

"Nay, Madam," said Father John, "the door is fast closed."

"Three times running I have dreamed of my nephew," she said, "and I have had a warning of sudden news."

"Why, Madam," said Father John, "'tis unbecoming a Christian lady to set such store as you do by signs and omens."

"We were ever a family acquainted with the supernatural," said my aunt complacently. "My great-aunt, Sybilla, had the second sight."

"Therefore she was well-named," said Father John, "but 'tis your play, Madam."

Yet my sister kept her posture of listening.

Seeing there was no time to be lost, I rattled the door-handle with my hand and then came forward a step or two. The old dog, who had been sleeping on my aunt's gown, too inert with age to hear me enter, now

came forward barking and wheezing ; but as he approached me his bark was changed to a whine of delight. My aunt stood up, leaning on her staff, and peered into the shadows. Father John, as if he had forgotten how many years had gone by since he had carried a sword, clapped his hand where a sword had hung, and then shaking his head as at his own forgetfulness, also stood waiting.

But Isabel turned round with what I saw to be a wonderful sweet smile.

"It is Lancelot—Lancelot come home again !" she cried, and then ran to me, and flinging her arms about me pulled me to the light.

For a minute, I did not know why, when she had drawn me into that circle they all fell back and looked at me with faces of dread. Then I remembered my Roundhead's dress.

"'Tis a masquerade," I cried, "and be prepared for other masquers."

Hist ! there was the rumble of the coach. "Madam my aunt," I said, "to-night Lily's Leaf is to be greatly honored. Prepare yourself to receive the Queen's majesty, now on

her way to a place of safety. She will lie this night at Lily's Leaf."

Then they seemed almost as though they had forgotten me. But at that instant the door was flung open, and old Rowantree stood in his faded livery, bearing a bunch of wax candles, to light the chamber.

How they had prepared so speedily I know not, but the hall also showed well-lit by the time the Queen's coach was come. There were wax candles in silver branches everywhere, and though the summer wind sighing through the house lifted the ragged tapestry, and set the lights to flare, Lily's Leaf showed little of its poverty at that first entrance.

As though they had been an army of servants stood the major-domo and his wife to let the Queen pass, and my aunt was on the threshold-stone to welcome in her Majesty, and Father John and my sister each stood a little way off; and there was the light in Isabel's eyes which only the thought of the King had power to bring there.

Our table was not sumptuously spread that night; but a couple of fat capons and a ham of Yorkshire well-pleased her Majesty; and

the few treasures of napery and silver left to Lily's Leaf were set to serve the meal. Also there was some wine which had lain in our cellar nigh one man's lifetime, and was fit to set before the Queen, and I think it comforted her of her fatigue.

Very fine it was to see old Rowantree serve her Majesty on bended knees ; and I think she missed nothing of the love and deference due to her.

Then after dinner she deigned to play at dominoes with Father John, and when she had worsted him called him a courtier.

"Why, your Majesty," said he, "true it is the light is in my old eyes, so that you have me at a disadvantage."

And when she laughingly would shift the candles he assured her that they made no difference.

"For," said he, "your Majesty's mother, the Queen-mother, did so dazzle me when first I beheld her many years ago, that neither euphrasy nor eyebright has availed to restore my vision. And the like with your Majesty, who are not less beautiful than she."

I could see that the Queen was mightily taken with Father John, who had never



forgotten the graces of his youth and middle-age ; but indeed she looked round upon all of us as if she loved us ; and where Isabel sat by her harpsichord with devout eyes turned towards her Majesty, I could see that the Queen's gaze often went.

And when it was time for her Majesty to go to rest she turned very sweetly to my aunt, and said she :

“ Shall I not have Mistress Isabel for my tiring-woman ? ”

And Madam Tregarthen gladly assenting, the Queen took my sister's hand, and drew her with her ; and Isabel's face was at once tearful and radiant, a mood which mightily became her.

## CHAPTER IX.

### WE MEET WITH GYPSIES.

THE next morning the Queen came to the Blue Chamber with my sister's hand in hers; and Isabel's face, which last night was pale as a lily, to-day seemed transfigured. As I learned afterwards, the Queen had talked much with her of the King, the White King, as he is known for his stainlessness, and the hero of my sister's dreams, and had seemed to take comfort from Isabel's love.

They had set her Majesty's table in the oriel facing south over the moat, with its moored fleets of lilies, and when she had seated herself she said 'twas as sweet as Paradise; a fancy which had often come to myself. And still she held my sister's hand between her own.

"Madam Tregarthen," she said, as my Aunt Monica stood before her bowed upon her staff, "will you give me this child?"

My aunt trembled as a dead leaf shivers in the wind.

"It is not a time," she said, "when a loyal subject of your Majesty can refuse you aught."

"Alas, dear friend," said the Queen, "do I ask you too much?"

"That your Majesty could not do," said my aunt stoutly. "Yet the child is dear, and I am very old."

"I have thought of it," said the Queen gravely. "But how would it be if anything so young and so fair should be left alone in these troublous times?"

My aunt bent lower on her staff as she replied:

"I have lain awake o' nights fearing it, your Majesty."

"She would be safe with me, dear friend."

"Or share your Majesty's danger."

"There will be none once we have come to our loyal city of Exeter, scarce more than a day's journey from this place. I wait but till my little one is born to return to my own country, until happier times shall dawn. The child would be safe with me."

"There are dangers at court, your Majesty."

"She shall be by my side and guarded as my own daughter."

"God knows I yield her to your Majesty right willingly, though I may hardly dare hope again to behold her. Besides, if I grudged her she has chosen for herself. You have chosen, Isabel?"

"Ah, yes, I have chosen," sighed Isabel, very low.

"There is no more to be said, your Majesty," said my aunt. "I could not keep her if I would. Yet I am a Tregarthen, and no coward. But your Majesty will remember there were once two children playing in this house, and soon there will be none but the very old."

Then the Queen kissed her on the cheek.

"We will come back," she said; "in the providence of God we will come back. He has not yet done with the Stuarts. I pray it be in thy time; and when the fortunes of this old house are rebuilt, as they shall be when we return, you will have the child again."

And after that no more was said, but Isa-

bel served her Majesty with tender duty, and while she rested sat by her on a tabouret playing very sweetly upon her lute. But the music sounded like a lamentation, as though she thought upon the King.

Quite early in the day the coach was at the door, and our horses waiting. Isabel went in the coach with the Queen; and I was the last to mount, for I had snatched the time to revisit the old places I loved, which, but for a little overgrowth, smiled as sweetly in the sun as when I had gone hence a boy.

Very sad it was to me to see Madam Tregarthen and her old friend the priest watch our departure, with the old servants a sorrowful group in the background, half-dissolved in tears. We were leaving behind us none but the very old. And yet as the Queen had said, they were safer without Isabel, for who would trouble to molest the very old? and if danger had come to Lily's Leaf they were unable to protect my sister.

Besides, her looks filled me with grief, for she was light as thistledown, and as white; and I could not help feeling what those years of calamity must have meant for her in her loneliness, seeing that all her dreams were

of the King. Now at least she would serve those nearest to him; and if his fortunes should turn, as even yet they might, she would come back to her pink comeliness as a rose that has been kept in darkness recovers when it is brought to the sun. Also she would comfort her Majesty, for it had been a grief to me to see my dear mistress with only men about her at a time when most she needed a woman's love.

We rode all day without mishap, and I ceased to feel afraid, for next day would see us among friends. And that night, though I entreated her, her Majesty would not halt except for so long a time as was necessary to refresh ourselves and give a little rest to our tired horses.

Our way lay through lonely country, over a great moor, the solitariness of which, for it seemed as alone with the sky as the highest mountain peak, might depress the spirits under happier conditions; but at this time we desired nothing so little as the sight of our fellow-man.

Now all around us lay a sea of brown moor, broken at times by great bowlders, and as we travelled we saw many herds of deer,

standing at gaze, and very stately they looked against the illimitable sky. Hares, too, fled from our path, and the rabbits scurried in thousands as we went by; and about the sunset we saw a great gold eagle hang in the sky, a mighty fine sight, for as he sailed in the sunset he seemed made of living gold, and we watched him till his color faded to dun and he was lost. Larks, too, rose everywhere about our feet and sank to their nests again as soon as we had passed; and there was abundance of game birds everywhere amid that sea of moor, where there was only the moor and the sky.

Towards day we had an encounter with a great party of those strange, wandering folk called gypsies, who were encamped in the shadow of a bowlder that stood like a small mountain on the moor, so that we were in the midst of them ere we caught sight of their camp-fires.

Two wild-looking fellows had caught the horses' heads, and a great number of men, women, and children flowed about the coach, so that we could not have ridden them down without murder. Besides which the Queen looked forth from her coach as if she liked

the scene, seeing which some of the wenches came forward and prayed to tell her fortune, while I parleyed with him who seemed the head of the tribe to let us pass.

He was a majestic-looking fellow, with eyes of night and a forest of hair and beard, and of a girth and a height that seemed to me in curious likeness to the great brown rock below which they rested. But, albeit his expression seemed harmless enough, he scowled on me as though I had done him a wrong, and demanded a sum of money from me ere we should pass, which I was in no way disposed to grant him, for the King's war had dissipated so much money that the Queen had scarce enough to serve her till she should reach the Queen-mother's shelter.

Certainly these wandering gentry had grown wondrous insolent during the troubles, so that the country, what with highwaymen, gypsies, and disbanded soldiers, was no place for quiet folk.

While I tried to smooth the fellow's ill disposition towards us the crowd had thickened about the coach; and glancing that way anxiously I was relieved to see that her Majesty seemed on excellent terms with the



gypsies, so that she held in her arms a brown gypsy babe, and smiled sweetly to it, kissing it, while the babe answered her in its tender way. And so kind were the faces that looked on at the scene that my heart leaped up, believing the Queen's sweetness of spirit might be the means of rescuing us from our uncomfortable position.

Even my fellow, who seemed a king among them, softened his face as he looked that way, and his eyes, large and wild, reminded me of a king stag we had seen on our journey, who had stood in the forefront of the herd and smelt the air towards us, scenting danger.

Then I saw an old woman emerge from the crowd and gaze upon her Majesty. She must have been very old. Her skin was like brown leather, and it stretched over the bones of her face tightly so that there were innumerable lines, but no wrinkles. Her body also had fallen in to be hardly bigger than a bird's: but for all her great age, her air was alert, and the little deep-sunk eyes were alive, when else the face had looked dead.

She was demanding to tell the Queen's fortune, but, "Nay," said her Majesty, "for

I am a wife and the mother of children, and all my great happenings have befallen me. But here is a child on the threshold of life. Give her gallants, and a fine husband and sweet children and a fair course, I beseech you, good Mistress Gypsy."

Now I saw that Isabel looked pale and full of fears, and I would have prevented this play, but that I feared to offend the gypsies still further. So I pressed nearer the coach, and as I did the gypsy king was by my side.

Then I saw the old gypsy take my sister's hand, and smoothing it softly peer into it by the light of the torches some of them had carried from the fires. There was a silence so great that it seemed you could hear far away the call of the sea, and the whisper of the night-wind in the grasses at our feet.

"I see no love nor marriage here," said the gypsy, "nor children nor a fair future. I see a heart spent for one high above us, and then—there is a black cloud and nothing more. Ah," she cried, her voice rising to a shriek, "I will see no more; I have seen too much."

She put away my sister's hand gently, and took that of the Queen. Now I was an-

gered at Isabel's pallor, and her great eyes of fear, and I would have sent the crone packing if I could have come near; but already she had the Queen's hand, who, while looking with tender anxiety at my sister, seemed as if she could scarce resist the gypsy's will.

I prayed to myself that the screech owl might have no such prophecy of ill for the Queen, and comforted myself with the belief that amid the strange, new circumstances Isabel would soon forget.

Meanwhile the crone groped and peered over the Queen's hand as though she were mightily puzzled, and muttered to herself and shook her head, while we waited in silence.

At last she looked up from her scrutiny, very fierce and sharp at the Queen.

"Why, what is here," she said, "in a Roundhead madam's hand? I see the daughter of a king, the wife of a king, the mother of kings. Are you a queen, Madam, as I once was, but a queen of gypsies?"

"I am Henrietta Maria of France and England," said the Queen simply, and almost as if she could not resist to speak the words.

Then these simple people burst into such a cry of love and loyalty as ever I have heard, and the king advancing placed himself and his tribe, and all that was theirs, at her Majesty's pleasure, and kneeling by the coach-door prayed her Majesty to alight and stay with them a little while, which the Queen graciously was pleased to do; and strange it was to see her sit at meat while the king served her, and all those wild people stood around, looking on her as if she were more than mortal.

Then I understood the frowardness before, which was not indeed to us but to our garments; for these wandering people were King's folk, and much persecuted by the Parliament who, God help, would have all men cut to a pattern, and that the Round-head.

Then ere we parted there were led up to us two wild and shaggy little ponies, pretty creatures of a great spirit and wisdom, which were the gifts of the gypsy king to the Queen and my sister.

And we parted from them with blessings and tears.

But just as the Queen's coach began to

move, the old woman who had called herself a queen, came to my side. .

“I told the Queen nothing,” she whispered, “but there was death in her hand. And the death in your sister’s was the same. Listen ! The King will die; and your sister will die of it, and many another with her; but I said nothing to the Queen, because I, too, am a woman and the mother of children, and once I, too, was a queen.”

## CHAPTER X.

### I FALL INTO THE HANDS OF FAIRFAX.

AND now my story draws to a close, for I will not dwell upon those years in which I wandered between France and England, an instrument in the hands of those who would compass his Majesty's deliverance ; for as all the world knows, these efforts availed nothing.

But in the dangers and escapes of those times I had ever two faithful friends and comrades, for Tom Dale remained with me as my body-servant, and my Achmet had never yet failed me.

And now at last, and this was the winter of 1648, the King, who had so long wandered homeless, a shuttlecock between the Parliamentarians and the Scots, had at last found a resting-place in his own Palace of Whitehall, where he was indeed in the hands of his bitterest enemies. Yet no one at that

time guessed the fatal issue he would have of his troubles; though I know he dreaded for himself that the malice of his enemies would not stop even at regicide, if that could be done privately.

Now I was bearing messages from the Queen to the King, in that very month of December, and since we yet had our friends in the very prison I rode without fear, and Tom Dale behind me, on a very brisk and frosty morning, so keen that it set the blood to tingle, and even amid such sorrows made the youth felt in our hearts.

We wore as usual the dress of citizens of London, the sad-colored garments which were the only wear since those hypocrites were come into power.

I had the Queen's letters safe hidden in a pocket of my saddle, constructed to keep such treasures, and so long had we gone to and fro with impunity that now we had come to fear no surprise.

I remember that I was riding with a slack rein, and with upturned face was listening to the wondrous sweet song of a robin in a tree, when Tom cried out that we were pursued. I looked back in my saddle and saw that a

troop of mounted men with swords drawn were hot-foot upon our track. They had taken to the sward so that we should not hear their horses' hoof-beats, hoping so to surprise and surround us.

"There is nothing for it but speed, Tom," I shouted back to him ; and I felt no wise dismayed, for I would have set the speed of my Achmet against that of any race-horse in England ; and these rode heavy troopers' horses, built for endurance, but not for flight.

No sooner did they see that we apprehended their pursuit than they were upon us with a great shouting. I spurred my Achmet, who rose like a bird, and Tom, who was well mounted to keep pace with me, came thudding behind me, shouting, " Their nags are as heavy as their wits. They have no chance against blood ; " for I think Tom, too, felt the exhilaration of the unexpected danger.

However, our flight was soon cut short. From a thicket on our left there came a sudden report of firearms, and at the same moment I felt a sharp tingling of pain in my leg above the knee, and knew I had been hit.



"Tom," I gasped, "they have had me this time."

"Alas ! they have," cried Tom, "and just when we had put so snug a distance between us and their troopers. Shall we light down and fight for it ?"

"Nay," cried I, flinging myself from the saddle, though the effort cost me much pain and a great effusion of blood. "But take Achmet and go on. You know what is to be done as well as I do. Receive the King's dispatch when it is ready, and take it to those we know of at Dover. Then if you will, come seek me."

Tom was already in Achmet's saddle, yet looking at me doubtfully, when a soldier, then another, and another came leaping over the fence that divided the wall from the road. At the same time we heard the thud of the mounted party as it approached ; so, seeing there was no time for speech, he drove spurs in the barb, and left me there, leaning against his horse's side.

I made no resistance when they surrounded me, and said little, feeling indeed rather faint for loss of blood ; but never had I seen so many sour faces, so that I was conscious of a

dim wonder in my heart as to whether these Puritans were in very act to change the wholesome faces of Englishmen.

They interrogated me very angrily as to who I was, and why we had ridden away from them.

"That you should know," said I, "who ride down and fire upon honest citizens in pursuit of their peaceful avocations."

"Honest knaves and traitors!" cried a pimply-faced man, who seemed to be in command of the troopers. "If ye were honest citizens ye had not feared the soldiers of the Lord."

"I am a timorous man," said I, "and so likewise is my friend. We mistrusted your intentions."

By this time I felt very sick and faint and was wondering how much longer I should be able to answer them, when the pimply-faced captain cried :

"Here, fling him across his horse and take him to the General. We shall soon find out if these are the rogues we wanted."

Then they bound me in the saddle, and a trooper rode by me, leading my horse, and we retraced the way we had come. I knew

that by this time Tom must have distanced those who went in pursuit, for some of them came back, hanging the head. But I was ill at ease, for I knew traitors must have been at work to apprise the army of our coming.

Presently, after riding some way on a side road that skirted a wood, we came suddenly upon a great common, studded all its way with little white tents, and the place seemed as busy as so many hives of bees, with horsemen coming and going and soldiers exercising, and pickets at work, and I know not what briskness of a camp.

Yet was there none of the shouts and jovial greetings common among soldiers, and as we rode on our way, though many sour and curious glances were cast upon us, none asked a question, so that I thought within myself that truly these Puritans had changed the very nature of man.

At the door of a great bell-shaped tent, before which a soldier was pacing, my guard stopped.

"Let the General know," said my captor, "that Captain Jones brings a prisoner."

The soldier turned from his pacing and

passed within. In a short space of time he returned.

“Will Captain Jones bring up the prisoner?”

I was then taken down from the horse, and still partly bound was led within the tent.

At a table in the midst sat a man writing. For a minute or two no sound was there, other than the scratching of his quill. Then he pushed away his papers, turned his chair about, and faced us. It was Sir Thomas Fairfax.

Now was I amazed at the ravages war had wrought in his face. He had aged much since our last meeting, and he looked so careworn, so anxious, and so haggard that I rued it, albeit he had been seduced by these hypocrites and had fought against the King.

“We have met before, sir,” he said, eyeing me narrowly.

“At the Three Posts Inn near to Reading, some seven years ago come next May,” I answered him.

“Ah, yes,” he said. “You are Sir Lancelot Tregarthen,” and he smiled faintly to himself. “Have you been at peace or war since we met?”

"At peace," I said, "alas ! since I was attached to the Queen's person."

"And now ?"

"I am a broken gentleman of fortune, like many a better man."

"Sir Lancelot," said he suddenly, "you have had a wound ; you are bleeding."

And indeed the blood, which had filled my jack-boot, now begun to form a little pool about where I stood.

"Through the excellence of your marksmen," I said.

"Captain Jones," cried the General hastily, "'tis a chirurgeon we need and not a guard. Withdraw your men and find me Dr. Stannes. I am answerable for this gentleman."

Captain Jones bowed deeply and went. Although he had been froward with me I could see that his bearing to his General was one of great love and loyalty, which the common soldiers shared towards this valiant, though misguided man.

As soon as Captain Jones had left the tent, Sir Thomas Fairfax struck off himself the cords wherewith my hands were bound, and helped me to a couch which stood in the tent. He then proceeded with great sweetness and

gravity himself to cut away my boot so as to remove it without violence to my wound ; and while he was doing it, came the leech.

His verdict was a comfortable one, seeing that, willy-nilly, I must regard myself as a prisoner.

“ If the flesh inflame not,” he said, “ ’twill heal in a month. Meanwhile quietness and abstinence will best serve it.”

He then dressed it with a **vulnerable** and left us.

Now here was I in the strange position of dwelling in the General’s tent, for he would not hear that I should remove. I had lost much blood, so that for some days I was content to lie in drowsy quiet. I had no thought of an escape, seeing that there was a guard upon the General’s tent, and that the camp lay all around. For the rest, he had seemed to trust me, since he let me be, only saying one day with his quiet smile :

“ When the wound is healed ’twill be time to talk of a parole, which is stronger than cords among gentlemen.”

And as to his tenderness for me in those days, surely no woman could have been sweeter.

Now being so close to Sir Thomas Fairfax I could not but observe many things. And one was his insistence and earnestness in prayer. Often at night when he thought I slept I have seen him praying with such an extremity of anguish that I have felt myself shudder and grow pale. And he has lain long on the earthy floor of the tent groaning, so that any stony heart might ache to hear him. By degrees it was borne in on me that he yet loved the King, and that his sufferings were for the King's sake. I would his Majesty might have known it, for he had found it extremely bitter to lose my Lord Fairfax and his greater son.

At last I was afoot again, and sore sick of the cramped life I led.

One day that I had raised the flap of the tent and looked with envy on the meanest trooper that might come and go, Sir Thomas Fairfax came behind me and drew me within the tent.

"You would be going?" he said.

"Alas, that I might!" I answered.

"Whither would you go?"

Now for some strange reason my tongue spoke of itself words of imprudence.

"To London, to see how it fares with the King's majesty."

He turned away, and a sweat broke out on his face.

"They will not dare to hurt the Lord's anointed," he said to himself rather than to me. "Ah, no, Harrison has sworn to me that there is no danger ; and I have prayed for the light and the leading, and it has not been vouchsafed."

I was spell-stricken at the words, and gazed at him dumbly. He had flung himself into a chair and covered his face with his hands. Presently he looked at me, and his gaze was wild and disordered.

"They will not dare hurt him," he said.

"They will not dare," echoed I, for indeed none had forecast the wickedness and daring of those regicides.

He breathed a little freer.

"Sir Lancelot Tregarthen," he said, "will you ride on my business to London ?"

"That will I," said I, "if it conflicts not with my duty to the King."

"Go, then," said he. "Bring me word how he fares. Thomas Fairfax should yet



be a name to win entrance even to the King's prison. I have your letters and passports made ready, and have given you a fleet horse. If there is danger to the King ride day and night to bring me word. My Lady is in London, but if she has sent a messenger they have stopped him."

"And what will you do, General Fairfax," I asked, "if danger there be?"

He drew himself to his full height.

"I cannot trust this mutinous and insolent army," he said, "but my own men will follow me. God save the King!"

He lifted his hat as he spoke.

"God save the King's majesty!" I responded.

"And now," he said, "your horse will be ready in half an hour."

So I went forth from the camp entrusted with Sir Thomas Fairfax's mission to the King; and strange it was to me to think how I had come and how I went, and how in that month's space I had learned to love him who had been the King's enemy.

Now very eager I was to have news concerning Tom Dale and my Achmet, and if the mission had prospered and the King's

letters were safe with the Queen over sea.  
Because the knowledge that treachery had  
been at work in the matter of our pursuit  
and my capture made me fearful.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE END OF ALL THINGS.

WHEN I entered London town on the morning of the 30th of January, 1649, I found the streets wrapped in a fog so thick that, as I proceeded, myself and my horse might have been alone in a world devoid of other life.

Fairfax's letter had taken me past the guards and such outposts as I met on my way towards London; but I found the fellows sullen and silent, and had had no news of how things fared with the King. Even now that I was within London it might have been a city of the dead.

I had some ado to find my way to the Blue Boar in Holborn, the host whereof was a King's man, and where I had been used to put up on my errands; and indeed the morning had advanced some hours when I rode under the archway and into the courtyard.

I had looked at most to find some sleepy

ostler to take my horse and usher me within, but as I came into the courtyard I became aware that the place was lighted and busy; and seeing the lights through the fog gave me a strange mournful sense of drawing near to a house in the dead of night, and finding it all lit up because that some one lay there a-dying.

As I came within the circle of the lights, Job, the ostler I well knew, came forward and took my horse.

“Lord ha’ mercy !” he cried when he saw my face. “Art tha’ still alive, master ?”

“Why, what else should I be, rascal ?” I cried. “How fared it with Tom, my man, and the barb, when they came hither a month syne ?”

“Tom, thy man !” repeated the fellow with a sort of sob.

Then he ran away from me as if he were possessed, shouting to Master Melton, my host of the Blue Boar, to come forth, that he was needed.

Master Melton came running forth, very white, I could see, about cheeks that were wont to hang fat and rosy.

“O Lord, sir !” he cried, “have you heard

nothing ? Alack and alack, we had thought your worship also was dead ! ”

Now the phrase “ also was dead ” instantly checked my anger, with I knew not what foreboding. I sprang from my horse and flung the reins to the nearest fellow; and now the courtyard was full of them, and taking Master Melton by the arm I led him within the house. I drew him within the first room, hardly noticing that pale women’s faces peered at me from the corridors, and turning him about demanded news of my Tom.

“ Alack, sir,” he cried, wringing his hands, “ ’tis a sorrowful tale ! Alack, that I should have to tell it ! ”

“ Tell it straightway, good Master Melton,” I cried, “ or I shall be tempted to forget you are a friend and treat you as an enemy.”

“ Alas, sir, no,” he said, and despite his figure he seemed to rise to a height of mournful dignity. “ ’Tis no day for King’s men to draw upon each other, this day when our sovereign lord is to die by the violence of men.”

Now I was but newly recovered of my wound, and when he said this terrible thing the world passed away from me and I fell

like a log at his feet. For many hours I lay so, and they thought I should have passed away without speaking; but I came to myself on the evening of that day, and lay watching the knitting-needles of Mistress Melton, the hostess of the Blue Boar, as she sat in the firelight near my bed.

When she saw I was stirring she lit a branch of candles and came to my side.

She too was pale, and as she looked down at me the tears chased each other in runnels adown her comely face.

"I must get up," I said. "I have business with the King."

"Alas, my poor young gentleman," she said, "they have killed him!"

Then it came upon me what had caused my seizure, and I hid my face in my hands.

After that I was ill many days; indeed it was a spring day when they wheeled me at last to look over the window-ledge upon the scene in the busy courtyard below.

Then at last they thought I could bear to hear the story of how the King had died, for Master Melton himself had stood with the crowd to see his martyrdom, and had witnessed in Westminster Hall his most grievous

trial. And however his light had been obscured when he reigned King in the sight of all men, it had shone forth with such lustre in those dolorous hours that never shall it be eclipsed in this our England.

Then Master Melton told me how the King's death had been accompanied by signs and portents, and how that for grief many had died, and others had been seized with a wasting sickness, and yet others had lost their wits, and were in little like ever to recover them.

"Alas!" I cried out of the fulness of my heart, "if the General Fairfax could but have known!"

"Why, yes," said Master Melton, "they do say he had risked all to save the King, and the very hour of his death was held in prayer by Colonel Harrison lest any rumor should reach him of what was toward. And 'tis said he will win no more battles for the King's enemies. Myself beheld his Lady at the King's trial, who when her Lord's name was called, answered for him nimbly: 'He has more wit than to be here.' And when they impeached his Majesty in the name of the people of England, came her cry again:

‘No, not a tenth part of them.’ They would have shot her down then if she had not been the Lady Fairfax; but I saw his Majesty smile and lift his hands towards her almost as though he blessed her.”

“Alas!” I cried again: and at that moment I pitied not so much any friend or lover of the King, but this same misguided, great soldier whose heart I had been privileged to behold.

“And now,” I cried, “since I am inured to trouble, tell me about my Tom.”

For I knew no more than that Tom was dead, as so also was Achmet, in the King’s service.

“He came hither without mishap,” said my host, “and yet I feared, for ’twas reported to me that the Roundheads had spies upon this place. Yet it might be that they were drawn to the Oliver’s Head yonder, where, alas for merry England! one is found to fill men with the heathenish liquor known as coffee, and other men, yea, miscalled soldiers, are found to drink it. To an accompaniment of psalms moreover.

“Well, thy Tom went on his errand, bearing his saddle upon his head as usual, and to



hear him assume the saddler's speech and knowledge of his trade set my kitchen wenches nearly to dying with laughter; and thy barb fretted himself in the stall a couple of days at most.

"Then of a Friday night—thou hast heard 'tis unlucky to start a journey or an enterprise upon a Friday—thy Tom came in roaring for the barb. And would not wait but to swallow a flagon of brown Burton. Yea, we shall not see his like again at emptying of the flagon !

"The barb was brought forth, leaping and caracoling to be off, and said Giles or Miles, or one of the lads, 'The horse thinks 'tis a long road till he reach his master.' Thy Tom saw himself to the adjustment of the saddle, and that all in the harness was safe, looked to the priming of his pistols, drew his belt about till the sword was to his hand, and mounted and rode forth.

"We had hardly cried 'God speed' after him when there was a great hubbub in the street, and the gates of our courtyard were charged to and held by a score of troopers, else, indeed, we had sallied forth to help thy Tom, though we had been forced afterwards

to swear that we mistook his assailants for footpads. But we were in prison behind our gates, and only through the grating I witnessed that most heroic struggle.

“For they were on thy Tom like gnats about a man in summer, and he was pressed back against the wall slashing everywhere with his sword, and in vain trying to draw his pistols. And thy Achmet, as though he knew how precious a thing he guarded, reared high, giving what shelter he could to his rider, and then suddenly crashed forward on a Roundhead’s skull. All the time from an upper window of the Oliver’s Head two men did view that fight ; and one I could swear was Master Oliver Cromwell, the regicide.

“Alas, it could end but one way, and thy Tom, ere he was spent, went near to saving the King, for at last he had succeeded in drawing his pistols, and suddenly raising himself in the moonlight he took aim at Oliver himself. And had shot him to a certainty but that some of the troopers perceiving his design dragged him from his horse and hewed him to pieces in the gutter. And thy Achmet shortly afterwards died.”

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When I rode out again from London town my hair that had been black was sprinkled with white. I rode like one without hope or fear, looking neither to right nor left: and the birds in the yet bare woods, the snowdrops pushing above the earth had no power to give me pleasure.

I came so with a slack rein and a hanging head to the camp I had left with so different a heart, and speaking to no one, rode on till I was come to the General's tent.

The man on guard stood aside to let me pass, and I passed within, dropping the tent-flap behind me.

The General sat as I had seen him when first I was brought there a prisoner, and as he turned at my coming I noticed without ruth, so greatly was I absorbed in my own sorrows, the blood-shot eyes and the face, scarred, it seemed, with trouble, of the King's enemy, who yet had loved him.

Silently I unbuckled my sword and laid it on the table before him.

"Take it again," he said harshly, "you are no longer a prisoner."

I assumed my sword once more.

"And the steed?" I said.

"Take it, if you will accept a gift from my hands."

"Alas, General," I began, but he interrupted me with the fury of grief.

"Go," he said. "I know all you can tell me. I know that you came too late, and that I was fooled by men and forgotten by God. Go, sir, I entreat of you."

And so I passed out of his presence, and saw him no more. But riding slowly, came to Lily's Leaf some days after, and there rested with Madam Tregarthen and Father John. And came in the nick of time, as it proved, for our calamities were not at an end, and my aunt had surely died of grief when we had tidings that Isabel had died of the King's death, like many another tender soul, if I had not been there to support her.

But not so many months afterwards, when I had closed her own tired old eyes, I passed over to Ireland, and fought against the Lord Protector, as they named him, under the King's generalissimo, the Duke of Ormond ; and in time found again health of mind and body.

And now, as I conclude these pages, I am once more at Lily's Leaf, with a dear wife

at my side and children about my knees. For in the fulness of time God brought back his Majesty Charles the Second to the throne of England. In the sunshine of royal favor I have prospered, and might be my Lord Tregarthen if I would, but should gain nothing by the change of name, so keep that which my fathers made honorable.

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